

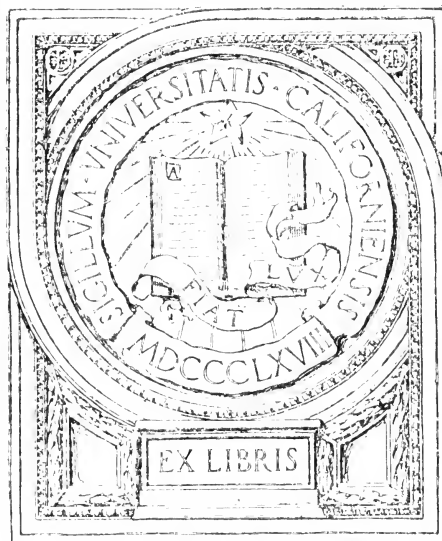
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THE LAST PAGAN

THE LAST PAGAN

BY
JAMES WESTFALL THOMPSON

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS BEFORE
THE CHICAGO LITERARY CLUB
FORTY-THIRD YEAR
OCTOBER 9TH, 1916



But slow that tide of common thought
Which bathed our life retired ;
Slow, slow the old world wore to naught,
And pulse by pulse expired.
Matthew Arnold, Obermann Once More.

CHICAGO LITERARY CLUB
1917

TO THE
AUTHOR

Gift, author

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TO
W. H. P.

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THE LAST PAGAN



VERY thoughtful man, when he has reached the "forties" of life, must have developed some interest in philosophic thought and have formed some sort of philosophy of his own, perhaps intangible and incommunicable to others,

yet sufficient unto himself. Such men have lived in every age, and will continue to be unless the race is to perish of moral inanition.

The history of one such clear and brave thinker of the Middle Ages, hitherto not merely forgotten but utterly unknown, is embraced between the covers of this little book. It is that of a young mediæval student, nurtured in the academic skepticism prevailing at the University of Paris in the thirteenth century, who became fascinated with the study of ancient philosophy, especially Neo-Platonism and

Aristotelianism, knowledge of which the Middle Ages acquired through the medium of Arabic and Jewish thought. Finally, captivated by the glamour of the religion of Julian and the dead gods, he secretly became a pagan in thought and feeling.

"The ghosts of words and dusty dreams,
Old memories, faiths infirm and dead,"

to him became "the heritage of splendid, moving things."

How came this forgotten paladin of paganism to be discovered? From my boyhood the imagery and vision of the famous hymn "Jerusalem the Golden"¹ has had a charm for me, though I am far from accepting its theology. The authorship of this mediæval Latin poem, in the original entitled *De contemptu mundi*, is ascribed to one Bernard of Cluny, of the twelfth century. But who was Bernard of Cluny? Tradition says that he was a Bréton. In the summer of 1906 I attacked the problem of the authorship of this poem, and, as the result of researches which need not be entered into here, came to the conclusion that Bernard, instead of having been a Bréton, was a Provençal, a son of William V., seigneur of Mont-

¹ For every thing pertaining to the authorship and history of this famous hymn of the church see the late Samuel Macauley Jackson's *The source of "Jerusalem the Golden,"* together with a prose translation by Mr. Henry Preble, published by the University of Chicago Press, 1910.

pellier in southern France. This "footnote to history" saw the light in the *Cambridge Journal of Theological Studies* in April, 1907. I never thought of reverting to the subject again.

In the spring of that same year I went to France for study, and there was forwarded to me across the Atlantic once more a letter which was to prove to be the open door to one of the most interesting experiences which has ever befallen me. It was a letter from His Grace, François M. A. de Cabrières, the bishop of Montpellier, written in ecclesiastical Latin, of which this is the translation:

BISHOPRIC OF MONTPELLIER

MONTPELLIER, HÉRAULT, 1907, 20 mai.

Optime Domine:

It was with great astonishment and pleasure that I saw your article recently published in the last number of the *Journal of Theological Studies*.

The town, popularly called Murles, is situated in my diocese; but I had never heard that the pious author of the poem concerning celestial glory was born in it, and Neale himself locates the natal place of our said monk in the town of Morlaix in Brittany, and asserts that he was born of an English family.

But your opinion is very pleasing to me, and I would like to know what has been published about the life, the writings and the poem itself of Bernard, whether in England, or in Germany, or among us.

I presume this much upon your kindness, and ask that you will do me the favor to write a brief summary, in which I may learn to what sources I should go, what books also to read, in order that I may acquire knowledge readily in regard to this matter per-

taining to my diocese, so distinguished by his birth and virtues.

If ever, on any day, in travelling through France, you wish to visit Montpellier, and God be willing to lengthen my days till that time, it will be an honor and a pleasure to me to be your guide to the ancient town of Murles, and we will say our prayers together not far from the ruins of that old castle where, perhaps, Bernard was born.

Believe me, Domine Optime, your humble and devoted servant in Christ,

FR. M. A. DE CABRIÈRES,
Bishop of Montpellier.¹

¹ Optime domine:

Maxima admiratione et satisfactione mihi fuit quod, in ultimo fasciculo *Diarii de Theologicis Studiis*, nuperrime edito, tuam viderim notam super identitate Bernardi Cluniacensis. Oppidum, vulgo Murles appellatur, in mea diocesi situm est; sed numquam audieram in eo natum fuisse pium auctorem Rhythmi de gloria celesti: et ipse Neale natalem locum dicti monachi nostri in urbe Britanniae minoris Morlaix reponit, eumque e familia anglica ortum affirmat. Tua vero sententia maxima mihi arridet, vellemque cognoscere quidquid de vita, scriptis et ipso rhythmo Bernardi publicatum fuit sic, sive in Anglia, sive in Germania, et etiam apud nos. Illud de benevolentia præsumo quod mihi digneris scribere summam brevem, in qua possim videre quasnam debeam fontes adire, quos etiam libros percurrere ut convenienter de tali diocesano meo, et natalibus et virtutibus præclaro notitiam acquirere possim.

Si quadam die, Galliam percurrento, Montempesulanum visitare desideras, et Deus dies meos ad hoc usque tempus servare voluerit, ad antiquum pagum Murles te ducere mihi honor erit et gaudium, amboque presec nostras effundemus non longe a ruderibus veteris castelli ubi forsán Bernardus natus est.

Me, Domine Optime, tuus obsequiosus et devotus servus in Christo, crede,

FR. M. A. DE CABRIÈRES,
episcopus Montempessulanensis.

I lost no time in accepting this interesting invitation. The bishop was a perfect type of that charming kind of ecclesiastic of which the French clergy, in particular, are examples. He was tall and spare of figure, with an ascetic beauty of countenance which made his face a benediction; his manners were those of the gentlest and most refined of grand seigneurs of the *ancien régime*. I was glad when Pius X. elevated him to the cardinalate, in which exalted office, alas, he lived too short a time.

The good bishop read English better than he spoke it, and my French was no better, I fear. But we managed to get along well. His library was a place of joy—a great room lighted by diamond-paned windows, with the atmosphere of a monastic scriptorium hovering over it. The visible books were few, save for those upon his table. There were no book-cases. The books were all kept in presses after the manner of the Middle Ages, as they still are in the Vatican Library.

But we did not see Bernard's birthplace together. The bishop's library had more attractions for me than the obscure hamlet in the country near by. Some of his books I already knew, more of them I had read of but not read. But books, except incunabula and those *rarissimi libri* which collectors prize, exist in numbers great or less; examples even of the rarest books may be found in the British Museum or Harvard University Library.

Manuscripts, however, are birds of another feather. There may be, of course, several copies of a manuscript.¹ But many are unique. In the small collection of manuscripts which the bishop possessed was one which soon fixed my attention.

Every one knows the story of Browning's "Old Yellow Book," that crumpled mass of parchment in which he discovered the plot of *The Ring and the Book*, a manuscript now among the cherished treasures of a great library. In a smaller degree such a discovery was then mine. With pride, yet with a certain measure of hesitation, the bishop laid before me a few leaves of parchment for the possession of which he whimsically apologized. It was a mediæval Latin poem composed of two hundred and forty hexameter lines, covering eight pages. The parchment leaves measured six and three-quarters inches in length by

¹ Some ancient authors have descended to modern times in one MS. only, or in a few MSS. derived immediately or with little interval from one. Such are Lucretius, Catullus, Valerius Flaccus, and Statius in his "Silvæ." Others there are whose text, though in the main reposing on a single copy, can be corrected here and there from others, inferior indeed, but still independent and indispensable. Such are Juvenal, Ovid in his "Heroides," Seneca in his "Tragedies," and Statius in his "Thebais" and "Achilleis." There is a third class whose text comes down from a remote original through separate channels, and is preserved by MSS. of unlike character but like fidelity, each serving in its turn to correct the faults of others.

A. E. Housman, Manilius, *Astronomicon*, bk. I, introd. xxx-xxxi.

four inches in breadth. The text itself measured five and three-quarters inches in length by two and three-quarters inches in width. There were thirty lines to a page. As a rule the letters of the manuscript were excellently formed, but small. The first letters of each line were separated from the others, so as to appear like a column of figures. The manuscript was probably of the late thirteenth century. Whether it was the original or a copy of the original I am unable to say. It is certainly the only known example in existence, and I am inclined to believe that it was the original handwriting of the author. Seeing my intense interest in the poem, the good bishop permitted me to make a transcript of it, and I spent two arduous but delightful days in so doing. That is why I never got to Murles with the bishop. At the end of this term I had already imposed too much upon his time. Dear old saintly man, I cherish the memory of him!

The poem is the most startlingly pagan utterance which I know of in the whole field of mediæval literature. It was without formal title, the only indication of such being merely the capital letters D. V. R. at the head of the first page. For a time they had for me the cabalistic mystery of the famous DXV of Dante in *Purgatorio*, canto xxxiii. After some study of the manuscript I came to the conclusion that the mysterious letters stood for *De*

vera religione — “Concerning true religion.” This title, I believe, was directly borrowed by the unknown writer from a treatise of St. Augustine with the same title, and was deliberately so chosen. For the whole purpose of Augustine’s tract is to prove that there was no religion worthy of the name in the ancient pagan cults; while the whole tenor of this poem is to show that “forgotten things,” as Sir Gilbert Murray has reminded us, “if there be real life in them, will sometimes return out of the dust, vivid to help still in the forward groping of humanity.”¹

In the history of thought there are cycles, each characterized by a dominant form of thinking and a peculiar quality of the imagination. The lines of partition are not always distinct between these periods, of course, and the edge of one epoch blurs into that of the next. But nevertheless the differentiation is manifest. The Renaissance merged into the Reformation, though the exact point of transformation is undiscernible. The dividing line is really not a point or a mark, but a penumbra.

But great thoughts, and especially great systems of thought or philosophy, rarely wholly die. The Greek and Latin classics still live, and nearly every high philosophy yet has some votaries. Names may be changed, but the teaching remains imperish-

¹ *Four stages of Greek religion*, p. 184.

able. Every philosophic system may be considered both from the point of view of its own time and of all time—from the latter because it presents some solution to the problems which the universe raises that an intelligent mind *may* adopt.¹

Thus it happens that in every age there have

¹ Is Sir Leslie Stephen quite just when he writes: "The briefest possible glance at the old systems of philosophy shows us . . . nothing but imperishable ruins—imperishable æsthetically, but logically mere crumbling fragments. We can still read Plato with delight; but the delight is due to the beauty of style and exposition, not certainly to the conviction imposed by his reasoning. Aristotle's philosophy is a marvel for his time; but his theory of the universe is no more tenable than his natural science. . . . The vast development of scholastic philosophy in the Middle Ages showed only how far unlimited ingenuity and subtlety may lead in the wrong direction, if it starts with mistaken principles. It ended by upsetting the doctrines which it attempted to prove, and had finally to commit suicide or fall before the insurrection of living thought. The great who revolted against its tyranny in its later stages constructed new systems which, to them, seemed demonstrable, but which to us are already untenable. We cannot accept Descartes or Spinoza or Leibnitz or Bacon or Hobbes or Locke as giving satisfactory or even coherent systems. . . . Philosophies of every different variety have been not merely accepted by those who first devised them, but have been taken up in good faith by whole schools of disciples; they have been tested, on a large scale, by systematic application to all relevant questions, and one after another has become bankrupt, has lost its hold on the world, and confessed that it leaves the riddle as dark as it was before."—Leslie Stephen, "The vanity of philosophizing," in *Social Rights and Duties*, vol. 2, pp. 187-89.

been souls out of tune with the prevailing note of their time, whose spiritual affiliation is with a remoter, earlier epoch. The older the race grows, and the greater the variety and accretion of its history, the more numerous do these phenomena surviving from a former period become in our modern life. Whistler was a child of the Renaissance, Newman of the twelfth century.

Such an one is, we say, "misunderstood," when we should say that he is "ununderstood." It is of the nature of man to look askance at the votaries of unconventional things, whether of art or literature, of philosophy or religion. Convention owes much of its force to mass weight, tradition, the inertia of conservatism. It is, therefore, in that degree, a denial in terms of imagination in life. When convention is backed by the authority of state or church to enforce conformity in the form of sumptuary laws governing clothes and attire, or in the form of dogmas prescribing what shall be believed and prohibiting what shall not be believed, then it becomes a tyranny, and the man who manifests unconventional ideas which are not according to the standards imposed is regarded as a rebel or a heretic.

For many years it was the prevailing belief that the Middle Ages were characterized by an absolute ignorance of and hostility to antiquity until the Italian Renaissance; that me-

diæval literature and mediæval art were spontaneously developed, in full originality, without the aid of ancient thought and ancient art. Only of late has this erroneous idea been overthrown, or at least radically modified. Modern research into the history of mediæval culture has conclusively shown that mediæval literature and the fine arts owed much both of their inspiration and their form to the persistence of antiquity.¹

The charm of antiquity exerted its spell over mediæval minds more than we think, in spite of the antagonism between mediæval and ancient ideals. The opposition between the two ideals began to be apparent in the third century. The ancient world saw its genius expiring in the time of the Antonines. After

¹ Anton Springer, *Das Nachleben der Antike im Mittelalter*, 2 vols., Bonn, 1886, and a review of this work by Eugène Muntz in *Journal des Savants*, 1887.

Rahn, *Das Erbe der Antike*, Basel, 1872.

Bartoli, *I Precursori del Rinascimento*, 1876;

Comparetti, *Virgilio nel medio evo*.

Graf, *Roma nella memoria e nelle immagiozioni del medio evo*.

Gaston Paris, *La légende de Trajan*.

Gidel, *La légende d'Aristote*.

Sathas, *Roman d'Achille*.

Paul Meyer, *La légende d'Alexandre*.

Dunger, *Die Sage vom trojanischen Kriege in den Bearbeitungen des Mittelalters und ihre antiken Quellen*, Leipzig, 1839.

Boutaric, *La connaissance de l'antiquité chez Vincent de Beauvais*.

Julien, "Alexandre pendant le Moyen-Age," in *Annales archéologiques*, 1847.

them the originality of the mind of the ancient world utterly disappeared; the taste became banal; thought stagnant. Christianity, although in part suffering from the universal decadence, showed a greater intellectual and moral force than the secular world, and began to form its own canons of literature and art. Yet for a long time Christianity was content to borrow from paganism the established formulæ, giving them, however, a new application and a new interpretation. But little by little truly Christian themes developed. Begun during the period of the persecutions, the transformation was completed by the early fifth century. By that time Christian thought and Christian art, even though retaining a great number and variety of motifs which were of pagan origin, nevertheless not only had developed its own types, but had crystallized them. A new world of art and of the spirit had come into being.

During the first period belief in the superiority of Græco-Roman literature and art, at least from the point of view of form, was unchallenged, except among the zealots of the faith. What was denied and opposed was the immorality of the ideas, the license of the portrayal. But the victory of the church in the fourth century altered the relation of things. The persecuted church became the triumphant church. It was for its former adversaries henceforward to plead for clemency.

What attitude did the church adopt towards the literature, the art, the philosophy of antiquity? It was one chiefly of hostility and iconoclasm. "Let us shun the lying fables of the poets and forego the wisdom of the sages of antiquity," exclaims Gregory of Tours in 600 A.D. Yet centuries of spoliation and neglect were required to waste the inestimable heritage derived from the past. Perhaps we may regard the eleventh century as the epoch when the reminiscence of antiquity ceased to be a living force and passed into the domain of history and erudition. By that time only a few strong spirits still cherished in their secret hearts ideals out of a glorious past, and strove to breast the current of prejudice and indifference.

The hostility of both the mediæval church and the mediæval princes to antiquity was partly a matter of principle, partly instinctive. The church and the secular powers were banded together to sustain the Christian religion, the authority of the church, and the polity of a feudal Europe against innovation and change. The memory of ancient Roman republicanism was a prolific inspiration to revolution in certain parts of mediæval Europe and most of all in Rome. In 998 Nicholas Crescentius, the son of a tribune of Rome, attempted to overthrow the papal domination by an impassioned appeal to the glories of pagan and republican Rome. Out of frag-

ments of ancient ruins he built that picturesque little house which still stands facing the Ponto Rotto. In the twelfth century Arnold of Brescia proclaimed the necessity of destroying the temporal power of the popes and the rebuilding of the Capitol. The same enthusiasm for antiquity fired Cola di Rienzi. Yet even in the Kulturdämmerung of the eleventh century there are gleams of the old light. André of Fleury [died circa 1056], describing the architectural changes which his superior, the abbot Gosselin, made in that monastery, uses the famous phrase attributed to Augustus: *urbem laterciam repperi, relinquam marmoream*.

In the twelfth century a new spirit, or rather the old spirit become new, began to blow across Europe, which drew its inspiration from the pagan world. Ancient culture began slowly to come into its own once more. Archbishop Heraclius of Lyons [died 1163] wrote a treatise entitled: *De coloribus et artibus Romanorum*, in which he deplored the destruction of the monuments of antiquity. Pilgrimages to Rome stimulated interest in the remote past.

Bishop Henry of Winchester [1129–71] returned from a visit to the Eternal City with a great collection of ancient marbles, to the astonishment of his people. In Germany Hildesheim early became the seat of a fascinating artistic renaissance. Bishop Bernward

[993-1022], inspired by a visit to Italy, the country most redolent of antiquity and pagan tradition, with the aid of imported Italian craftsmen, created those exquisite bronze doors which separate the west vestibule from the nave in Hildesheim cathedral. Italy itself had nothing approaching them until Ghiberti created those world famous bronze doors of the Battistero in Florence. In twelfth century France "Hildebert of Le Mans was a classical scholar, and in his time unmatched as a writer of Latin prose and verse. Many of his elegiac poems survive, some of them," says Taylor, "so antique in sentiment and so correct in metre as to have been taken for products of the pagan period. One of the best is an elegy on Rome obviously inspired by his visit to that city of ruins."¹

This reviving interest in antiquity did not pass unchallenged. The church was not unwilling to have scholars like John of Salisbury toy with classical literature as an intellectual diversion. But it was quite another thing in the church's eye to have men derive a spiritual inspiration from the founts of paganism. The "pious" and the self-righteous bitterly inveighed against the lovers of ancient culture. "Who now toils to learn the divine writings so much as those that are pagan?" Bernard of

¹ On Hildebert of Le Mans see Taylor, *The Mediaeval Mind*, vol. II, pp. 137-47. His elegy on the ruins of Rome is given in vol. II, pp. 191-92.

Cluny scornfully exclaims. "He that babbles Socrates and has the sinuous utterances of the sophists at his fingers' ends — *he* is made an abbot. . . . A great man is he who knows Agenor and Melibœus and Sapphic verse. The letters of old, the muse of old, are now highly prized and thought the cream of wisdom."

The leaven of antiquity worked a spirit of intellectual revolt in Italy as early as the eleventh century. Vilgard, master of the school at Ravenna, declared that what the ancient poets had said was true, and that they were worthier of belief than the Christian mysteries.¹

In the reign of Robert the Pious of France a considerable sect of heretics developed in the vicinity of Orleans, who declared that miracles were fables and repudiated almost the whole body of Christian mysteries. Many of them were burned at the stake—the earliest example of what became a common practice of the Inquisition in the thirteenth century.² The first conspicuous victim of the church who was condemned because he followed the lure of ancient thought too far was Amaury of Chartres, who was professor of logic and exegesis in the University of Paris, and who fell under the spell of Plotinus and became a Neo-

¹ Rodolf Glaber, *Historiarum*, Bk. II, ch. 12.

² Rodolf Glaber, Bk. III, ch. 8; Rénan, *Averroes et averroïsme*, p. 282.

Platonist, though he borrowed much also from the Stoics and Aristotle. Condemned as a pantheist he was burned with ten of his followers in the first decade of the thirteenth century.¹ Roger Bacon was profoundly imbued with paganism, declaring that "we should seek in the books of the ancient philosophers the soul of truth which revelation placed there; that we should follow up the traces of Christian dogma in paganism [a most penetrating utterance] and thus add all we can to our inherited treasure usque ad finem mundi, quia nihil perfectum in humanis adinventionibus."² He had the courage to say that "contemporary Christians were inferior morally to the pagan philosophers, from whose books they might well take a leaf."³

While it is true, as Coulton has observed, that "the more abstract dogmas inherited from the early ages of Greek discussion—the Greek ages, tinged with Greek philosophy—never seem to have influenced the popular mind very much,"⁴ nevertheless, especially in the thirteenth century, there were many classes of society deeply penetrated by the pagan

¹ For literature on Amaury of Chartres see Chevalier, *Bio-bibliographie*, p. 95.

² See quotation in De Wulf, *History of Mediaeval Philosophy*, p. 393.

³ Thorndike, "Roger Bacon," in *American Historical Review*, Jan., 1916, p. 247.

⁴ Coulton, "The Plain Man's Religion in the Middle Ages," *Hibbert Journal*, April, 1916, p. 596.

philosophic thought of antiquity. Plato, Aristotle, and Lucretius were the greatest of these influences. That of the first tended towards pantheism and was far less destructive of established authority than the two others. Enormous and revolutionary as the influence of Aristotle was upon mediæval thought, its effect was wholly among the highest intellectual circles, chiefly at Paris, where the university was deeply imbued with academic skepticism.

The philosophy of Lucretius, on the other hand, pervaded various strata of middle class society and was disquieting and destructive of prevailing authority in both church and state, in especial in the case of the former. Mediæval Epicureanism became the vogue of heretics, of rationalists, of the Ghibelline partisans of the independence of the state from church control in Germany and Italy; in France it backed the arm of Philip IV. in his great conflict with pope Boniface VIII. It is implicit in the teachings of John of Jandun and Marsiglio of Padua. The Florentine historian Villani ¹ records how Florence was twice devastated by fire, once in 1115 and again in 1117, and attributes the double calamity to a judgment of God, "forasmuch as the city was evilly corrupted by heresy, among others by the sect of the Epicureans — and this plague endured long time in Florence until the com-

¹ Bk. iv, sec. 30.

ing of the holy religions of St. Francis and of St. Dominic.”¹

The most positive influence, though, of Lucretius is perceived in the beliefs and practices of the sect of the Cathari, the greatest heretical sect of the thirteenth century. It spread all over southern France, and was largely recruited from the industrial classes of the thriving manufacturing towns of Languedoc.²

“The youthful ‘perfects’ of the sect,” says De Wulf, “were wont to frequent the schools of Paris or throughout Italy in the later years of the Albigensian period [and] to attack the savants of the Dominican Order . . . The Cathari taught in their psychology that the human *spiritus* perishes with the body. . . . Their favorite sources were Epicurus and Lucretius, whose materialistic atomism they reproduced. And having disposed to their satisfaction of the immortality of the soul, they boldly denied the doctrine of reward and punishment for good and evil.”³

¹ It is to this sect that Dante alludes in *Inferno*, canto 10, although the commentators usually take it to be an allusion to Frederick II. and his votaries. So Plumptre and Norton, and Kington-Oliphant, *The emperor Frederick II.*, I, 371. Ozanam, *Dante*, 6th ed., 1872, p. 48, and Rénan, *Averroes et averroïsme*, p. 284, rightly trace the reference to 1115.

² See Alphandéry, *Les idées morales chez les hétérodoxes latins au début du XIIIe siècle*.

³ De Wulf, *History of Philosophy*, pp. 389, 219. For a comprehensive history of the preservation and influence of Lucretius in the Middle Ages see

The result of all this intellectual ferment was a degree of rationalism in the later Middle Ages of which but few are aware.¹ Indeed, in courage and penetration the skepticism of the thirteenth century probably exceeded what is current now. Where to-day is the university professor who would have the hardihood to pronounce the *Impossibilia* of Siger of Brabant? ²

That "eternal spirit of the chainless mind" never has been utterly coerced in spite of thrones and dominions, principalities and

Phillips, *Lucrèce dans la théologie chrétienne du IIIe au XIIIe siècle*, Paris, 1896. A briefer statement is in De Wulf, *loc. cit.*, pp. 59 and 126. Rénan, *Averroes*, etc., pt. II, sec. 12, contains a valuable survey of the history of the introduction of Arabic philosophy into Europe.

¹ For some striking examples see Coulton in *Hibbert Journal*, April, 1916, p. 598.

² See P. Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant et l'averroïsme latin du XIIIe siècle* (1911); *Hist. lit. de la France*, XXI, pp. 121-22.

In Brewer's edition of the *Monumenta Franciscana* (Rolls Series), vol. I, p. 634, is report of a discussion by some mediæval students of the question: "Utrum sit Deus?" Cf. Church's translation of Dante, *Hell*, canto X, p. 79, note 119. The chief Averroistic centres were the University of Paris and the court of Frederick II. of Hohenstaufen at Salerno. The Paris leaders were Siger of Brabant, Boethius the Dacian, and Bernier of Nivelles. Siger flourished 1266-77. In the latter year he was condemned by the church. Raymond Lull, in order to justify the sentence, composed a dialogue in which the "philosophici," represented by Socrates as interlocutor, were badly handled by the theologians. See *Hist. lit. de la France*, vol. xxix, p. 333. Dante praises Siger in *Paradiso*, canto X, 136.

powers, lords spiritual and lords temporal. In every century of the mediæval era there lived souls who would not be wholly shackled.¹

¹ See the article by Paul Fournier, "Un adversaire inconnu de St. Bernard et de Pierre Lombard," in *Bib. de l'école des chartes*, xlvii (1886), p. 394. It is a MS. from the Grande Chartreuse in the library at Grenoble, No. 290 (see *Catalogue des manuscrits*, Gren. p. 215) entitled *Liber de vera philosophia*. Evidently written after 1179, it shows the abiding influence of the sect founded by Gilbert de Porrée, bishop of Poitiers. "What influence," says Fournier, "this little group had upon the development of the popular heresies which so spread at this time in the south of France is a question which it would be interesting to resolve, and one which merits the attention of scholars."—*Bib. de l'école des chartes*, xlvii, p. 417.

One of the boldest heretical writers of the time—was he *our* poet?—was Vidal de Blois, author of a satire upon scholasticism entitled, "Le livre de Geta et de Birria, ou l'Amphitryonéide," written in Latin, of course. He probably lived in the time of Louis IX. of France, but it is not certain that he was a native of Blois. The poem is daringly pro-pagan. One line reads:

Nil audet magnum qui putet esse deos.

This declaration so scandalized Cardinal Mai, who discovered the manuscript in the Vatican Library in 1833, that he suppressed it in his edition, without indicating the lacuna. See his *Classici Auctores*, vol. V, pp. 463-78. Later editions of this satire are those of Thomas Wright, *Early Mysteries*, 1838, and of Müller at Bern, 1840. For other information on Vidal of Blois see *Bib. de l'école des chartes*, sér. iv, vol. 5, pp. 474-516; *Hist. lit. de la France*, XV, pp. 428-34; XXII, pp. 39-50; *Journal des Savants*, 1886, pp. 421-24; Rénan, *Averroes*, etc., p. 283. A sermon of St. Thomas Aquinas delivered July 20, 1270, and severely reflecting on the votaries of pagan philosophy and those who doubted the immortality of the soul, may have been a rejoinder to this poem of Vidal. See Mandonnet, *loc. cit.*, p. 109, note.

The bravest rebels defied and suffered accordingly. Many such maintained a dual existence, like Roger Bacon, outwardly orthodox, but inwardly living their own intellectual and spiritual life, telling few or none their inmost thoughts; sometimes endeavoring to roll the burden off by committing their reflections to secret pages, or writing them in cipher, like a recently discovered manuscript of Bacon.

What is the function of the heretic? Let Nietzsche answer:

"The philosopher, as a man indispensable for the morrow and the day after to-morrow, has ever found himself, and has been obliged to find himself, in contradiction to the day in which he lives. His enemy has always been the ideal of his day. Hitherto all those extraordinary furtherers of humanity whom one classes as philosophers . . . have found their mission in being the bad conscience of their age. . . . They have always disclosed how much hypocrisy, indolence, self-indulgence, and self-neglect, how much falsehood, was concealed under the most venerated types of contemporary morality; how much virtue was outlived."¹

The same thought has been expressed in other words by the late professor Josiah Royce:

"Philosophical thought that has never been skeptical is sure not to be deep. The soul that never has doubted does not know whether it believes. . . . A study of history shows that if there is anything that human thought and cultivation have to be thankful for it is an occasional, but truly great and fearless age of doubt."²

¹ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 153.

² Royce, *The Spirit of modern philosophy*, p. 7.

Ninety-nine per centum of a man's religion is the result of inheritance and environment. It is the one-hundredth per centum of originality that counts.¹ How the unknown author of this poem, cherishing the ideas which he did, and loving the vanished pagan cults so passionately — almost as passionately, one might say, as the emperor Julian ten centuries before him — survived in the depth of the Middle Ages, it is well-nigh impossible to conjecture. It is small wonder that his identity is not revealed in the manuscript. Even to-day Maeterlinck's works are on the Index of the church of Rome because, to quote from the indictment,

"he has accepted the fiat of the destructive criticism of science. For him religion is a city laid waste, God is a myth as completely dethroned as Jupiter Olympus; Christianity is a discredited system relegated to the regions of exploded beliefs with the crumbled theogonies of Greece and Babylon."

What would Rome have done with this poet had it discovered him in a century when the inquisition was at its height?

The unknown author of the poem whose discovery has been related was one whose taste and quality of thought made him a "Strayed Reveller" out of antiquity into the scholastic period, a veritable pagan in the age of dogmatic theology. Who he was—I mean

¹ The thought is Coulton's, in *Hibbert Journal*, April, 1916, p. 593.

his name—I do not know. When he lived can only be conjectured from internal evidence in the poem; that he was French by birth is certain, and he was surely a cleric. Judging from a striking allusion to “the granite piles of Carnac” and a reference to “Atlantic’s surge” he may have been a Bréton.¹ He must have lived in the thirteenth century. His enthusiastic allusion to Aristotle’s philosophy, which was condemned by the church in 1210, makes one think that he was writing when ecclesiastical authority was vainly trying to seal the books of the great Stagirite to Europe’s increasingly inquiring mind.² A reference to the Lateran shows that the poem must have been composed before the fall of Boniface in 1303, before the removal of the papacy to Avignon. But the most conclusive evidence as to the time when the author lived is offered by the striking allusion to the pyramids, which could hardly have been so vividly mentioned before St. Louis of France’s ill-starred expedition to Egypt in 1248. The reference is so fresh that it is almost impossible not to think of it as derived from first-

¹ Brittany to-day is the most intensely catholic portion of France. But this catholicism dates from the seventeenth century. In the Middle Ages Brittany was notorious for the active influence of many vestiges of ancient paganism. See the thesis of Camille Vallaux, *La Basse-Bretagne*, Paris, 1907.

² On Aristotle in the Middle Ages see De Wulf, *loc. cit.*, pp. 251-53.

hand observation, or at least from one who had seen the pyramids with his own eyes.

There are things in the poem of which Dante, too, makes mention. Each alludes to the legend that pope Gregory the Great deplored that so good a man as the Roman emperor Trajan, because he was a heathen, was not saved. But such allusions are mere accidental identities. Modern research has shown the improbability of Dante ever having been in Paris or elsewhere outside of Italy. Moreover, Dante was born in 1265 and died in 1321. His great poem was not given to the world until close to the end of his life. Our poet, I am sure, lived and died in the thirteenth century. There is one allusion, though, which teases out of thought:

“Nam etiam tenebris immersum Tartaron atra
In lucem de nocte vocant.”¹

Did the poet know Dante's *Inferno*? I think not. It is the protest of outraged intelligence against popular belief in a material hell of fire and brimstone. The spirit and temper of this poem are absolutely antithetic to Dante.² The temper is pagan Greek of the fourth century, it is that of Julian and the dying gods. Whoever the author was, he read and cher-

¹ “For there are those who summon hell itself into daylight out of black night and the gulf of shadows.”

² The way in which Dante looked upon the “paganism” of the court of Frederick II. is evidence of this. See *Hell*, canto X.

ished in his secret soul Lucretius' noble poem, *De rerum natura*, the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, the *Astronomicon* of Manilius, Vergil, and Aristotle's philosophy. Aristotle was, of course, by the thirteenth century, available in Latin version through the medium of Arabic and Jewish scholarship. The same is true of Plato and Neo-Platonic thought, especially Plotinus, whose influence is apparent in parts of the poem.¹

The problem presented by the undoubted

¹ Most of these authors are too well known to need more than mention. But a word may be in point about Manilius. He lived in the reign of Augustus, being younger than Lucretius and a contemporary of Vergil. His poem, in five books of hexameter verse, is an astrological treatise abounding in zodiacal allusions and mathematical terms like triangles, hexagons, dodecatemories, and the dodecatemories of dodecatemories. Nevertheless, in spite of its apparent absurdity, it is a sober and serious work which well repays reading. Goethe, perhaps the greatest of modern pagans, knew Manilius well and inscribed four of his lines in the Visitors' Book on the heights of the Brocken, Sept. 4, 1784:

Impendendus homo est, deus esse ut possit in ipso;
Quis dubitet post haec hominem conjungere coelo?
Quin coelum posset nisi coeli munere nosse?
Et reperire deum, nisi qui pars deorum est?

Man must be weighed as if there were a god in him.
Who will hesitate to link man with heaven?
Who can know heaven save by the boon of heaven?
Who can find out God save one who has a portion
with the gods?

See Kramer, *Ort und Zeit der Abfassung der Astronomie des Manilius*, p. 24; Ellis, *Noctes Manilianae*, p. viii.

use of Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* by this unknown author is a difficult and fascinating one. Hitherto scholars have been absolutely certain that the Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius were unknown to any writer in the Latin West in the Middle Ages, and the same conviction

Two of the five books of Manilius have recently been edited with great erudition by Mr. A. E. Housman, who is both a Latin scholar and a poet, and an English translation of the second book published by Mr. H. W. Garrod, of Merton College, Oxford. The former says of Manilius:

"The last of the poets to feel the impulsion of the *furor arduus* of philosophic speculation, he addresses himself with arresting insistency to men in whom the age-long fact of social and moral confusion had well nigh killed faith in an order of the universe [he had] an unconquerable conviction of the paramountcy of reason . . . [and] a singular freedom from superstition. . . . In his detachment from superstition and in the lofty expression which he gives to this freedom, Manilius is the peer of Lucretius." And Mr. Garrod: "No one of the poets of stoicism has heard more clearly the call of the universe to its children or felt more powerfully the homesickness of humanity aspiring to a reunion with that which is divine." Introd., xii.

The most famous Jewish Neo-Platonist in the Middle Ages was Solomon Ibn-Gabirol, born at Malaga in Spain, 1021, died 1070.

"His poetry is characterized by its finish of form and loftiness of thought. His poems are mostly serious, sometimes gloomy. The most important of these is his 'Royal Crown' ('Kether Malkuth'), a religious-philosophical meditation, which has been translated into almost every European language. Many of his numerous religious poems have been incorporated in the Jewish liturgy. Of his philosophical works, written in Arabic, the principal one is the "Fountain of Life," based on the Neoplatonic system. Its Latin

is attached to the history of Manilius' *Astronomicon*. Our knowledge of both of them goes no further back than the fifteenth century. But this view must now be revised, for at least one bright spirit knew and loved their works in the thirteenth century. So far as we have positive knowledge, the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius was not known to the Latin West in the Middle Ages.¹ No mediæval Latin

translation, '*Fons Vitæ*,' is often quoted by Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Giordano Bruno, and others. He also wrote an ethical work, "Introduction for the Attaining of Good Habits of the Soul" ('Tikun Midoth ha-Nefesh'), and a collection of proverbs ("Selection of Pearls," 'Mibhar ha-Penim')."—(From Century Dictionary of Names.)

There is an excellent article upon him in the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

¹"The complete work was possibly left behind at Rome in safe keeping. After the death of Marcus some friendly hand whether of Pompeianus or Victorinus or Severus rescued it from its unworthy surroundings under Commodus and gave it to the world. Perhaps this inestimable service was performed by a daughter, Cornificia, whose only utterance that has come down to us breathes the spirit of her father's *Thoughts*. . . . Posterity had indeed cause to bless the unknown benefactor who caused to be published this *Megalopheléstaton Biblíon*. But it does not seem to have attracted much attention at the time, or for centuries after. We can trace it but fitfully through the ages, as known to one here and there, to a Themistius, an Arethas, a Suidas, a Tzetzes. Hardly did it win through to our own days in one MS. now lost and in another that is incomplete, and it narrowly escaped the fate of coming to us merely as *dissecta membra* in one of those anthologies which we owe to the 'moths of history,' the excerptors and epitomizers."—C. R. Haines, "The composition and chron-

translation of the *Meditations* is mentioned by any western writer; the earliest known manuscript, now lost, was in the original Greek and came to light during the Renaissance. Even the internal evidence in the writings of the great philosophic and religious authors of the Middle Age affords no clue that they had any knowledge, direct or indirect, of the *Meditations*. Yet the indebtedness of our poet to him is very large and very evident. He must have had a now lost and unmentioned Latin version of the *Meditations* in his hand, for it is almost impossible to think that he had a first-hand knowledge of Greek and had the Greek original before him, although modern research has shown that a knowledge of Greek in the West in the Middle Ages was deeper and broader than was once supposed.¹ It is certainly of moment in the intellectual history of Europe that even one mediæval scholar has been found who was familiar with the writings of the only philosopher who ever sate upon a throne. We have here a new tribute to the perennial vigor of the Neo-Stoic philosophy.

In every century since its birth the Stoic philosophy, or what is more usually known as Neo-Stoicism, has had some followers. No

ology of the Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius," *Journal of Phil.*, xxxiii, 1914, pp. 294-95. Cf. Harris Rendall's translation of the *Meditations*, introd., p. cxv, and pp. 17 note, and 201.

¹See De Wulf, *History of mediaeval philosophy*, pp. 167-68, and especially pp. 243-47.

philosophy covers the whole case of the soul. But men rise on the stepping-stones which other seekers after God have laid.¹

Erasmus said of Seneca: "If you read him like a Christian, he wrote like a heathen. If you read him like a heathen, he wrote like a Christian." Mr. Edwyn Bevan has written:

"If some of the most cultured Christian converts like Justin and Augustine have passed into the church through the portals of the Stoic philosophy in the past, not a few of our modern thinkers have passed through the open door of the church into the porch of Neo-Stoicism, *i.e.*, the application of the inculcations of duty to humanity as a living organism. . . . Neo-Stoicism owes not a little of its content, its earnestness, its moral ardour, to the influence of early Christian nurture."²

¹ St. Ambrose "was strongly influenced by the popular morality of Ciceronian Stoicism, which was widespread among cultured western Christians, and which had, by its combination with monastic morality, brought about, in Pelagianism, the crisis so decisive for the dogmatics of the west."—Harnack, *History of Dogma*, V, p. 49.

[Pelagianism] "is the consistent outcome of the Christian rationalism that had long been wide spread in the west especially among the more cultured that had been nourished by the popular philosophy influenced by Stoicism and Aristotelianism, and had by means of Julian [of Eclanum] received a bias to Stoic naturalism."—Harnack, *Ibid.*, V, p. 172.

² *Quarterly Review*, June, 1910. Mr. Bevan is in error in this paragraph with regard to Augustine. "Louis Gourdon, *Essai sur la conversion de St. Augustine*, Paris, 1900, has shown by an analysis of Augustine's writings immediately after his conversion [A.D. 398] that the account he gives in the *Confessions* is premature. The crisis in the garden marked a definitive conversion from his former life,

The influence of Stoicism upon early Christianity is very interesting. A prefect of Constantinople, in the reign of the emperor Arcadius [395–408], weary of the world, retired to the solitude of the monastery of Mount Sinai and transmuted the *Thoughts* of Epictetus into a manual of devotion and discipline for the monks of the monastery.¹ Hildebert, bishop of Le Mans, in the twelfth century, composed a Stoic treatise entitled *Moralis philosophia de honesto et utili*, in imitation of Cicero's *Offices*, in which, with glorious disregard of history, he made Cicero and Seneca the interlocutors. In the preface of this work² he says that he was led in a dream to endeavor to formulate the philosophic thought of antiquity, and that in the dream he was told that Cicero was the greatest moralist of the pagan world.³ Hildebert followed

but it was to the Neo-Platonic spiritualism, and only a halfway stage towards Christianity. The latter he appears not fully and radically to have embraced until four years more had passed."—William James, *The varieties of religious experience*, p. 171 note.

¹ Zanta, *La renaissance du stoicisme au XVIe siècle*, Paris, 1914, pp. 124-28.

² In Migne, *Patrolog. Lat.*, vol. 171, cols. 1003-51.

³ *Moralium dogma philosophorum per multa dispersum volumina contrahere meditabar repente somnus obrepsit, statumque, ut fit, solo animi augurio primum illum esse Latinæ eloquentiæ auctorem Tullium mihi innotuit; post quem ille moralitatis eruditior elegantissimus Seneca, cum quibusdam aliis.*

For further on this interesting treatise see Zanta, *loc. cit.*, p. 127, and Picavet, *Histoire comparée des philosophies médiévales*, Paris, 1907, ch. vii.

Cicero's division of the subject rigidly. So, too, John of Salisbury, in the same century, in his *Polycraticus*, treated the problem of providence after the Stoic manner.

Erasmus, Calvin, and Zwingli admired Seneca more than any other ancient writer. Epictetus was the admiration of Montaigne, and a famous hero of protestantism in the sixteenth century declared that the world could well get along without any books except the Bible, Seneca, and Epictetus. Between the inevitability of Stoicism and the determinism — or, to put it theologically, the predestination — of Calvinism, there seems to have been a certain sympathy.¹

But Stoicism has appealed to others besides Renaissance pagans and Calvinist theologians. Sir Thomas Brown and Spinoza show its influence. What Aubrey de Vere has finely called

“The soul's marmoreal calmness”

appealed to Wordsworth, too. Walt Whitman is saturated with Stoicism. John Addington Symonds wrote:

“In these difficulties I fall back on a kind of stoical mysticism — on the prayer of Cleanthes (which is graven on his tomb), the poem of Goethe's ‘Gott und die Welt,’ the phrase of Faust,

‘Entbehren sollst du, sollst entbehren,’
the almost brutal optimism of Walt Whitman's

‘I cry to the cosmos, Though thou slay me, yet will
I trust in thee.’

¹ See Mr. Bevan's development of this idea in *Quarterly Review*, June, 1910, p. 571.

Can a religion be constructed out of these elements? Not a tangible one, perhaps; nothing communicable to another's heart. But a religious mood of mind may be engendered sufficient for the purpose of living not ignobly."

The greatest of the world's philosophies yet are less "broken lights" than iridescent parts of that "dome of many-colored glass" which "stains the white radiance of eternity." Tennyson makes Ulysses say that he is a part of all he meets. But we are more than that. We are part of all who have gone before, and lived and thought before us. The "thoughtless drift of the deciduous years" may cover the individual. But really great thoughts rarely perish utterly. It is as Goethe has written —

"Heard are the voices,
Heard are the sages,
The worlds and the ages."

Of all the philosophic writings which have survived from antiquity I think there is no doubt that the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius hold the palm for popularity in modern times. Epictetus is his only rival. Plato is unto the Platonists; Aristotle unto the Aristotelians; Plotinus unto the Neo-Platonists; Lucretius unto — not the pessimists, but clear and rugged thinkers who are not afraid.¹ In the

¹ "Is pessimism necessarily the sign of decay, of failure, of exhausted and weakened instincts? [Is there not] an intellectual predilection for what is hard, awful, evil, problematical?"—Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, p. 2.

Roman world of the end of the second century the two chief powers making for righteousness were Stoicism and Christianity. Fortunately for the enduring fame of Marcus Aurelius as a philosopher he lived in an age of transition when Stoicism had freed itself from its earlier almost adamant hardness, without losing its primitive ruggedness of character, and had imbibed some of the ethereal softness of Neo-Platonism, and perhaps of Christianity, too.¹ It is this transitional nature of Aurelius' thought which makes him a connecting link between ancient pagan Stoic philosophy and Christianity, and gives his *Meditations* such a remarkable popularity among serious-minded men even to-day. The charm which this unique soliloquy, originally written for no eyes save those of the author, has for men who live for

"The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration and the poet's dream,"

is a very wonderful one. It is said of Leo XIII. that when he was dying and his mind wandered, the watchers around his bed heard him repeat over and over again the golden

¹ "Marcus Aurelius has traveled far from the Cynic and earlier Stoic conception of man as a self-sufficing unit, without quite attaining the Christian ideal, which declares that he can only find his higher self in and through the development of the higher self in others."—Alston, *Christianity and Stoicism in the second century*, p. 9.

sentences of the *Meditations*. "It is one instance out of many of the persistent influence of Stoicism and its undiminished fascination for the noble-minded of any creed, or no creed, in almost every age or country of the civilized world."¹ Spedding called Edward Fitzgerald "the prince of quietists," and said that "his tranquility was like a pirated copy of the peace of God." Fitzgerald was not a professed Stoic; neither was this mediæval poet of ours. But each leans hard upon the Stoic philosophy, nevertheless, and the tranquility of each has a striking resemblance to that of the Stoics.

Whoever our author was, he was one of those men not brave enough outwardly to defy the church's authority; yet true sufficiently to himself at least to tend the flame of the light within his own soul. Thereby he gained a spiritual tranquility within which neutralized the narcotic effect of outward compromise and conformity. While his poem is partly tinctured with the lofty scorn of Lucretius, and much with the tonic quality of the Stoic philosophy and the spirit of the Aristotelian man of inquiring mind, yet it is also imbued with the softer mysticism of Neo-Platonism. But, above all, the poem is pervaded with a rationalism, a scientific quality of mind, rare almost to the point of non-existence in the Middle Ages. Whoever the author was he looked at

¹ Bevan, *loc. cit.*, p. 563.

things with level eyes and in the calm light of reason. He may have outwardly conformed to the precepts of Holy Church, but inwardly he was a free spirit. To him

“Stone walls did not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage.”

The authority of the church had no binding force upon his imagination or meditation.¹

He was a pure individualist. The mass-weight of mankind had no force for him. To him the religion of the time was a vulgar superstition. For him religion had to be, not a mass of credulous beliefs, but a philosophy. He had that antiseptic quality of mind which refused to accept a teaching which violated his intelligence and his reason. He refused to believe doctrines totally incapable of proof. He knew that instinct proves nothing, or everything, as one chooses, and that the argument derived from it is a fallacy.

But I must bring this introduction, already too long, to an end. Instead of being a porch through which the reader might enter into the poem, I fear that I have made it a peristyle instead. In the usual acceptation of the word, perhaps, this poem may hardly be called a translation. While I have often translated

¹“Learning alters us . . . But at the bottom of our souls . . . there is certainly something unteachable, a granite of spiritual fate, of predetermined decision and answer to predetermined, chosen questions.”—Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 181.

literally, I have not infrequently paraphrased the thought. The Latin language was capable of a density, a terseness of expression, which the English tongue rarely possesses in the same degree; on the other hand, a mediæval writer was usually inclined to be turgid. This double characteristic of the original has sometimes led me to expansion, sometimes to contraction of the thought. There are a few stanzas which have no absolute equivalent in the original; these are rather summings up of the author's feelings than literal reproductions of his language. In no case can they be considered as foreign to his mind. For they are in entire harmony with other liberal thought of the time. Sir Rennel Rodd, in his recently published delightful translations from the Greek anthology,¹ has written: "Of the quality of verse translation there are many tests: the closeness with which the intention and atmosphere of the original has been maintained; the absence of extraneous additions; the omission of no essential feature; and the interpretation, by such equivalent as most adequately corresponds, of individualities of style and assonances of language. But not the least essential justification of poetical translation is that the version shall constitute a poem on its own account."

I plead guilty to my critics, of sins both of omission and of commission, if this be the

¹ *Love, Worship, and Death*, London, 1916.

canon law of the translator; for no one knows better than I how far I have fallen short of the ideals here expressed. But one hope I still cherish, namely, that my poem constitutes a poem in form, in subject, and in spirit — that it is a poem in spirit and in truth.

The metre of the original, as said before, is hexameter. But hexameter, even when written by a master in English, fails of the effect its usage possesses in the classic tongue. Mr. W. H. Mallock some years ago gave to the world of the few who were fortunate enough to discover it a translation of parts of Lucretius rendered into the verse-form of Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*.¹ The success of his experiment has emboldened me to court failure by trying to use the same verse structure for this poem. I realize how rash and perhaps impossible a thing it is which I have endeavored to do.

Benson, in his *Life of Edward Fitzgerald*, has said: "There is a certain priestly mood which falls upon those in whom the need for creating what is beautiful is very imperious." This study has been a labor of love with me for several years. In order to understand and to feel the spirit of the theme I have atten-

¹ W. H. Mallock, *Lucretius on Life and Death*, London, John Lane, 1900. Mr. Paul E. More has published in the *Nation* of November 30, 1916, six stanzas, in Fitzgerald's verse form, of a translation of the *Bhagavadgita*.

tively read the history of the most important forerunners and rivals of Christianity, and — may I say it without pretentiousness?— some gleams of the piercing spiritual beauty of those ancient pagan cults seem to have illuminated the page as I have written. Two lines, which every reader will recognize, have been borrowed directly from Matthew Arnold and Tennyson. I have used them because they quite exactly express the sense of the Latin lines, while the beauty of their form imparts a charm to “the argument of mine afflicted stile.”

In the copious notes which are appended to the text of the poem, I have endeavored to trace back every line and every allusion to what I believe to have been the original source of the poet's thought, whether in mediæval or ancient literature, or in the Bible.

PROEM

Where the stately poplars quiver
In the sinuous Seine river,
Winding slow through popped ridges,
Underneath old Paris' bridges —
'T is of mediæval time
This my rhyme —
Dwelt a youth of clerkly ways
 Delving days,
And many a weary night
By the taper's flickering light
 Over monkish Latin lore,
 Volumes hoar.
Dry and musty was the quaint old
Knowledge saint-told,
Stored within the books unscanned
 'Neath his hand.
He was weary of the query
 Of the schoolmen's mind;
And his thought bent in its yearning
To the learning
 Of the world long years behind,
For his brain seethed with the dreaming
 And the teeming
Thoughts which faster, vaster,
 From the master
Minds of eld unto him came.

THE POEM

It came, what time I dwelt in fair Lutèce,
In student fellowship — O cloistered place
Of high renown and sweet illusionments,
Sorbonne, how dear and beautiful thy face.

II

A voice came crying to me on the wind:
"Shut to thy books, nor suffer thou thy mind
To be distraught by vain philosophers,
For they be all blind leaders of the blind.

III

"All vision has become a book that's sealed
To those who ever plough that sterile field.
Write thou this vision, for in days to come
Thy spirit's fruit an hundred fold shall yield."

IV

The wind that through the keyhole blew said: "Lo,
Thy teachers have no wisdom to bestow;
Those hooded monks tell all their thoughts like beads."
Untouched the door sprang wide and bade me "Go."

V

The time of any man is little space
Methinks; his spot of sojourn but a place
 Apart, and history an ocean marge
Whence mightiest waves retreat without a trace.

VI

Days, seasons, places, heroes and events
Fade and dissolve, and leave no lineaments.
 The granite piles of Carnac and the Sphinx —
Tell me, O sage, whose are these monuments?

VII

Beneath the weight of Egypt's pyramid
The sombre chambers of the dead are hid;
 Vast galleries and funeral rooms of rock —
Whose silence human footsteps never thrid.

VIII

Unconscious monuments of vanished might
Frown from the gloom there and the night affright;
 Pride, kingdom, power in every one of those
Grim visages of carven diorite.

IX

Who of those bones proprietaries were?
Whose frames those ashes formed? Canst thou aver?
 Or when the persons of those relics there
Entered the fastness of that sepulchre?

X

As soon find Moses' tomb on Beth-peor;
Tell me, what name, when hid, Achilles bore;
Which of the isles blind Homer's birth-place was;
What sang the temptress sirens from the shore.

XI

How futile is that awful pomp of death
Even for a day to stretch the vanished breath!
The mystery of death is doubly veiled
Where Egypt's hoary grandeur slumbereth.

XII

Long lasting memory, how few do find;
Oblivion scatters poppy as though blind.
The epitaph of Hadrian's horse survives
That purple Cæsar's fame among mankind.

XIII

Whether the best of men be known or not,
Or if there be not greater names forgot
Than those emblazoned on the walls of time —
This is a riddle none can solve, I wot.

XIV

Cyrus and Alexander, Cæsar — three
Who held the homage of the world in fee
Were fain to part with their own lives at last:
How mightier than mightiest are we?

XV

How many men innumerable — think! —
Journeyed aforetime to that selfsame brink
 Before and since those great ones trod the earth?
Think you that *you* shall float while others sink?

XVI

Sic transit gloria mundi: those long dead
And those late passed all sleep in the same bed.
 The years of many generations blend
Pope, peasant, prince, when buried.

XVII

The years seem long when they from us are far;
But come, they vanish swiftly as a star
 That rends the veil of darkness in the night
Like flash of some bright angel's scimitar.

XVIII

The fame men prize is oft oblivion;
Kings are but shadows on a spectre-throne;
 Sceptre and crown are baubles of an hour.
Is there, to human life, a corner-stone?

XIX

The beautiful is oft untimely gone;
The rose dies with the day that bloomed at dawn.
 And yet, what difference to thee or me
In the immensity of time out-drawn?

XX

Life is an archway through whose aperture
Into illimitable lands obscure

The endless files of mankind ceaselessly
Do march. Whence? Whither? Why? Ah, who is sure?

XXI

Go, pace the sand beside Atlantic's surge,
And see the sun sink slowly 'neath the verge,

Out on the luminous horizon far
Where sky and watery waste together merge.

XXII

So sinks the soul. But does *it* rise once more
In some new East? Upon some other shore?

Like amarant, immortal in the dark,
Or kneel eternally by some barred door?

XXIII

Far inland from the sea the rosy shell
Harbors the lingering sound of ocean swell;

No still small voice within my inmost heart
To me of past or future life doth tell.

XXIV

Man's life is of man's life the whole, not part.
Eternity is long, life short. Thou art

A mere mote swimming in the deeps of space.
Men die, gods die, the soul dies with the heart.

XXV

What boots it all at last when we are done?
What boots the day when sunken is the sun?
What then remains of man's much vaunted power,
When all the water in the glass is run?

XXVI

The world's face has grown grey in quest of truth.
More time has been consumed than Rome, in sooth,
To conquer and to rule the world required;
And still the riddle riddles age and youth.

XXVII

What was I ere my life began? None knows.
Where was I? Was I any where? Where goes
The soul at death? Is birth a waking dream
And death a swoon? Alas, the riddle grows.

XXVIII

No one can answer where or whither, what
Or how or why. We are — and then are not.
The world's wheel like a potter's disk revolves,
Moulding our clay into some jar or pot,

XXIX

Or vase, or thick flat plate, or bowl —
Mankind is fashioned as the seasons roll:
Some clean and bright and shining chalices,
Some vessels of dishonour without soul.

XXX

Who is the masterful Artificer?
Where is the pit from which we diggéd were,
That He might mould us from that neutral clay?
Did life on ocean's fertile floor first stir?

XXXI

Life's an uncharted sea, whose shore
All we, in vain, from East to West explore,
Pacing a few stades off in yearly course:
Of the great sea of life we know no more.

XXXII

What of that unknown and mysterious tract
Of life environing material fact?
Where God forever walks across the deep?
Blind, blind are we, each in his puny act

XXXIII

Absorbed. What will it profit us, the world
With all its sordid goods to have unfurled,
And forfeit of life's richest birthright make?
To dig for dross where full life lies impearled?

XXXIV

Our years are but an interval, of long
Or shorter time, which some men spend in wrong,
And some in listlessness, and some for wealth:
The wise alone seek truth and art and song.

XXXV

I've read somewhere that Gregory the Great —
Or was it Augustine?— deplored the fate
 (Because, forsooth, the heathen all are damned)
That Trajan barred from the celestial gate.

XXXVI

Dear God! Those ancient faiths once suckled souls
As great as those the Lateran controls.
 Aye, greater. Deep of stream those spirits were:
We puny creatures cling unto the shoals,

XXXVII

Afraid to launch out to the deeps which call
Because the terrors of the church appall,
 By self-authoritative priests imposed;
The bishops have made cowards of us all.

XXXVIII

Deaf with mortality's loud-clanking chain,
They only rouse my fierce wrath and disdain,
 With saints' excess-of-good-works, or with gifts,
Who commerce make of souls, heaven to attain.

XXXIX

Alas, that mankind, searching for the right,
Scarce in the wide world finds a glimmering light.
 Shame on those shameless ones who summon Hell
Out of the gulf of shadows and of night.

XL

Life is a struggle in the dark to hosts
Of men, who fight mere shadows and the ghosts
Of their imaginations. They are like
Scared sailors wrecked upon barbarian coasts.

XLI

There is an inward sky within the mind
Wider than measurement of sense defined,
Whose stars are thoughts transcending far and free
The grovelling mysteries of priestly kind.

XLII

The open mind is born of God, but these
Who vaunt the power of ghostly mysteries
To bind and loose and thrall the mind, are false
Hierophants of fabled destinies.

* * * * *

XLIII

'T is strange to me, as here I write, to think
That most among my friends—*par Dieu!*—would shrink
From me as heretic, if they but knew,
And deem my soul as vile as this black ink.

XLIV

They each and all belong to Holy Church.
My touch is foul and would their garments smirch,
Did they but know. . . . I wonder: Are they right?
If they are right my soul is in the lurch.

XLV

Well, souls of most men narrow houses are;
Thin tenements whose mud walls bear the scar
Of sordid, wretched, noisome lives that crawl
Thereon like flies. My soul would be a star.

XLVI

Man's life is from man's world a thing apart.
Do you the riddle guess? Within his heart
Abides his own real life. Abroad, he grants
The world's demands, with superficial art.

XLVII

The tide of time is at the ebb, and slack;
Stagnant is thought; the taste of life is brack.
The prayer of Samson was for light — my cry:
“Would that Time's ancient tide were surging back.”

XLVIII

As soon expect to sow the sea with oats,
Or sail the ripened fields in keeléd boats,
Find fish on land or camels in the stars,
Round to be square, kids lambs, that iron floats.

XLIX

Why does the church harass a driven leaf?
Or feed men thorns when corn is in the sheaf?
Give stones for bread and water for red wine?
The way to God is long and life is brief.

L

Proverbs of ashes, pious words of old,
 Dark sayings of the fathers slimed with mould,
 Lives of saints, silly miracles and cant
 Daily to us for nourishment are doled.

LI

Olympus' gods, thou Rome, hast seen retire;
 Zeus and Adonis like a dream expire;
 Glory depart from Ida; Dian's fane
 In ruin fall, and perish Vesta's fire;

LII

The high gods die like butterflies in frost;
 The glorious lore of Greece for ages lost.
 What wilt thou say before the bar of God?
 O Christian Rome, dear to mankind thy cost.

LIII

Charlatan and masquer! Sorceress!
 Base trickster of humanity's distress!
 Avenging Time shall yet take toll of thee,
 And shrink thy terrors into nothingness.

LIV

Age after age's cumulated wrong
 Like a dread storm on thee shall break ere long.
 Orbis ecclesiarum caput — Rome,
 Thou shalt yet be like some long vanished song.

LV

Temples and churches close beside the mart,
 Rondured by exercise of every art —
 Groined arches, chancels, painted glass, attest
 The yearning hunger of the human heart.

LVI

Yet will I not their god adore until
 The sky looks down on ruined wall and sill,
 On empty courts and grey cathedral aisles —
Ecclesia dum fuerit — Nihil.

LVII

When desolation strikes their thresholds bare,
 And wild birds lodge in broken chapter,
 When wolves howl in the hollow vaults below —
 When Holy Church is dead, I shall go there.

* * * * *

LVIII

Men's thoughts alternate, moon-like wax and wane;
 Life swims in circles; heart-tides, like the main,
 Though wandered far in split and tortuous streams,
 Shoreward recurrent yet shall turn again.

LIX

Basil and Julian be both now dead;
 Hypatia and Cyrillus buriéd;
 The Golden-Mouthed and Diocletian —
 Victor and vanquished in the selfsame bed.

LX

Poor work it is to jeer a fallen foe.
The pagan seers have vanished long ago
 Into the arms of that great silence which
Forbids us all its mysteries to know.

LXI

Are we more certain of the soul than they?
Is bishop better than a flamen? Say
 Whether the quality of life be raised,
Or if the world be happier to-day.

LXII

For me Aurelius' austere atmosphere
Breathes the idea of deity more clear
 Than sensuous emotion, mummery,
Or gorgeous ritual to church so dear.

LXIII

Religion was the worship of the soul
With him; entire surrender to control
 By what man's highest reason can divine:
"He saw life steadily and saw it whole."

LXIV

He built religion on a noble scheme
Of perfect consecration and the dream;
 Philosophy and poetry he loved:
The magic and the beauty of the theme

LXV

Are lost with us to-day, who whine our plaints,
Prayers, orisons, petitions, to the saints
More than to God, and reverence their bones,
And counterfeit their countenance with paints.

LXVI

Procul profani! . . . God is spirit, saith
The Book, in spirit worship and in faith,
Not in material guise, but spirit pure:
So was He worshiped when the world was rather.

LXVII

Plato, the Stagirite and Socrates,
Zeno, Lucretius, Epicurus — these
Darkened not counsel with scholastic wit,
And shame us petty moderns to our knees.

LXVIII

Those ancient pagan cults, behind the veil
Of figure, symbol, allegory, tale —
How pregnant they with beautiful surprise!
Ruddy, like sunrise on a fisher's sail.

LXIX

For myths are intimations deep and vast
(Born of the race's immemorial past,
Still with the dawn-dreams of creation drenched)
That earliest man the thought of God held fast.

LXX

Wine from those altars old give me to drain;
Forget religious tyranny, the stain
Of bitter creeds and darkened mysteries,
And dream the grey earth is renewed again;

LXXI

When gods called unto gods in high abodes;
Muse answered muse in odes and palinodes.
Religion then was life and art and song,
And not a thing of creeds and priestly codes.

LXXII

How singular and strange the heart of man!
Apt both to lag behind or lead the van;
Hugging false gods . . . and then, Prometheus-like,
Snatching the fire from heaven to fan.

LXXIII

Sometimes at sunset, gazing at the cloud,
Enrapt, I seem to feel that God has bowed
And come to earth to walk and talk with me,
And with a holy flame I seem endowed.

LXXIV

That orderly procession of the sky,
Marching in serried columns there on high
Brings me the sense of God pervading all
Not in the sacramental mystery.

LXXV

I can hold glad communion with the stars.
In life's fierce turmoil and the world's rude jars
How good to know that realm inviolate
Which no priest enters and no dogma mars.

LXXVI

Within his own soul each one finds his creed,
Springing responsive to his spirit's need;
Or golden grain or chaff before the wind,
Religion is of man's own heart the seed:

LXXVII

Hopes, aspirations, faintings sore,
Triumphs, defeats, wild strivings evermore,
Born of the eager hunger after God
In mankind Edenless outside the door.

LXXVIII

The Iliad of the Soul were nobler tale
Than Troy's far flaming ramparts, or the sail
That bore Ulysses to the Western Sea.
Not like unstable water, they prevail

LXXIX

Who bind their hearts to God's own chariot wheel,
Who march the planetary road, and steal
The alchemy of starlight and of sun —
On these alone God sets his crimson seal.

LXXX

“There is no wealth but life.” Resolve to be
Attuned to its sublime and serious key;
To wrest from out the dark of here and now
The great, the good, the true philosophy.

LXXXI

Not length of life, but clean, deep life avails.
There is no power whenso the impulse fails.
Corn grows of God’s good bounty, but for bread
Thou needs must beat the golden grain with flails.

LXXXII

Eternity is long, life short. The while
Thou liv’st a passing shadow on the dial,
Yet worth eternity’s whole self to thee.
Beware! It may be all thy chance of trial.

LXXXIII

True piety is not with measured pace,
With outstretched hands and melancholy face
To kneel before dead altars built with hands,
And to the lifted Host thy soul abase.

LXXXIV

To contemplate the world with open mind;
To do that duty which we nearest find —
Philosophy and creed this is to men
By sterile teachings not yet made purblind.

LXXXV

The poet word by word upbuilds his line;
By unseen stages climbs the towering pine;
 With steadfast purpose, painfully and slow,
Thou needs must form that character of thine.

LXXXVI

“To seek, to strive, to find, and not to yield,”
To clear the sight of those whose eyes are sealed,
 This righteousness alone exalteth man;
Not good imputed, of Elysian Field

LXXXVII

Dreaming, with hope of recompense therefor,
Or paltry fear lest shut may be the door.
 Virtue, how frail it is, when men there be
Who traffic even with the Conqueror.

LXXXVIII

Death is the ultimate keen edge of things;
Death is the highway of the King of Kings.
 He weeps who walks along that road with dread;
He who that highway walks intrepid, sings.

LXXXIX

And was it not to set forth this high claim
That saint and martyr, poet, prophet came?
 Some to be crowned with laurel wreath, and some
To sanctify their message in the flame.

XC

When roars the lion, who may lie asleep?
Not the awed shepherd crouched among his sheep.

Whether in still small voice or trumpet blast,
When God hath spoken who dare silence keep?

XCI

High poetry, high art, high truth, high God,
Are reached by paths the crowd has never trod,
That ignorantly gropes and stumbles on,
To all high aspiration but a clod.

XCII

As far as knowledge and clear reason show,
By their austere direction I will go;
And when, at utmost edge of thought they fail,
Like Hugo of St. Victor, in the glow

XCIII

Of far-off vision and of dim surmise,
To inner voices listing of surprise,
I still will climb, till o'er some summit far
The rose of God's own wondrous dawn shall rise.

They are conquered, they break, they are stricken,
Whose magic made the whole world pale;
They are dust that shall rise not nor quicken,
Though the world for their death's sake wail.

SWINBURNE, *The Last Oracle* [A.D. 361].

Schöne Welt, wo bist Du? Kehre wieder
Holdes Blüthenalter der Natur.
Ach, nur in dem Feenland der Lieder
Lebt noch deine fabelhafte Spur.
Ausgestorben trauert das Gefilde,
Keine Gottheit zeigt sich meinem Blick;
Ach, von jenem lebenswarmen Bilde
Blieb der Schatten nur zurück.

GOETHE.

NOTES

STANZA II.

Pagina claudere, jamque retexere desine multa.
Claudere pagina, denique carmina nostra, audite.

Cf. Marcus Aurelius I, 16: "Farewell, my books."
We find the same thought as to the futility of mere erudition in *Omar Khayyám*:

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and saint, and heard great argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door as in I went.

"Blind leaders of the blind" comes from Matt. xv. 14.

STANZA III.

Cf. Isaiah xxix. 11; Daniel viii. 26; Habakkuk ii. 2.

STANZA V.

Mutat enim mundi naturam totius ætas
Ex alioque alius status excipere omnia debet,
Nec manet ulla sui similis res. Omnia migrant.
Nihil constat, quoniam minui rem quamque videmus,
Et quasi longinquo fluere omnia cernimus ævo.

For time changes the nature of the whole world, and one condition of things after another must succeed all things, nor does anything abide like itself. We see all things change. Nothing lasts. We perceive that everything ebbs, as it were, by reason of years.

This closely reflects the thought of Marcus Aurelius:

The time of a man's life is as a point, the substance of it ever flowing—to be brief, as a dream or as smoke, so are all that belong to the soul. The time, therefore, that any man doth live is but a little, and the place where he liveth is but a very little corner of the earth; and the greatest fame that can remain of a man after his death, even that is but a little.—Casaubon's translation.

STANZA VI.

Inrevocabilis abstulerit jam præterita ætas,
Denique ab ignibus ad gelidas iter usque pruinas
Finitum est, retroque pari ratione remensum est;
Augescunt aliæ gentes, aliæ minuuntur,
Inque brevi spatio mutantur sæcla animantum,
Et quasi cursores vitæ lampada primordia posse.
Denique non monimenta virum dilapsa videmus
Quærere proporro sibi sene senescere credas?

Time now gone by has irrevocably passed. From summer fires to chill frost a definite path is traced out, and in like manner is again traveled back. Some nations wax, others wane, and in a brief space things are changed and, like runners, hand over the lamp of life. See we not the monuments of men, fallen to ruin, ask whether you would believe that *they* could decay with years?

STANZA VII.

Was the poet thinking of the striking verse in Isaiah xiv. 18?: "All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory, every one in his own house."

Or Job iii. 14: ". . . at rest with kings and councillors of the earth, who built for themselves pyramids."

There seems also to be some reflection of Vergil:

Ibant obscuri sola sub nocte per umbram
Perque domos Ditis vacuas et inania regna.
Æneid VI. 268.

Along the illimitable shade
Darkling and lone their way they made,
Through the vast kingdom of the dead,
An empty void, though tenanted.
Conington's translation.

STANZA VIII.

It is curious to see how a French poet of the seventeenth century, Pierre Le Moyne, in his now forgotten poem on Saint Louis in Egypt [1653], has visualized the heart of the pyramids in much the same way.

Sous les pieds de ces monts taillés et suspendus,
 Il s'étend des pays ténébreux et perdus,
 Des déserts spacieux, des solitudes sombres,
 Faites pour le séjour des morts et de leurs ombres.
 Là sont les corps des rois et les corps des sultans
 Diversement rangés selon l'ordre des temps,
 Les uns sont enchâssés dans decreuses images
 A qui l'art a donné leur taille et leurs visages;
 Et dans ces vieux portraits, qui sont leurs monu-
 ments,
 Leur orgueil se conserve avec leur ossements.

STANZAS IX-XII.

These identical reflections, couched even in much the same language, showing that there is no new thought under the sun, occurred to Sir Thomas Browne, the immortal author of the essay on "Urn-Burial."

"What song the sirens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among the women, though puzzling questions, are not beyond all conjecture. What time the persons of these ossuaries entered the famous nations of the dead, and slept with princes and counsellors, might admit a wide solution. But who were the proprietaries of these bones, or what bodies these ashes made up, were a question above antiquarianism. . . . The iniquity of oblivion scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of man without distinction to merit of perpetuity . . . Time hath spared the epitaph of Adrian's horse, confounded that of himself. . . . Who knows whether the best of men be known, or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot than any that be remembered in the known account of time?"

Compare Sir Leslie Stephen's noble brief for the forgotten great in his essay on "Forgotten Benefactors," especially the last paragraph.

"They will be forgotten before long as we too shall be forgotten—the incalculable majority within a generation or two. The thought may be painful, but the reasonable conclusion is, I think, not that we should fret over the inevitable; rather that we should purify

our minds from this as from other illusions, and feel ashamed of the selfish desire that our own names should be preserved when we know that so many who were far better and nobler than ourselves will be inevitably forgotten, and were better and nobler without the stimulus of any such paltry desire. . . . Though the memory may be transitory, the good done by a noble life and character may last far beyond any horizon which can be realized by our imaginations."

STANZA XIV.

The suggestion of the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius is positive in these lines of the original. But the Roman emperor makes the trio to be composed of Alexander, Pompey, and Cæsar:

"Alexander, Pompeius, Cæsar, cum tot urbes funditis evertissent tot hominum myriades in prælio cecidissent, ipsi quoque tandem vita excesserunt."—III. 3. [I have quoted an old seventeenth century Latin translation as it brings out the identity between the two more strikingly.]

The lines of the poem are worth quoting here, for they are not unimpressive:

. . . prole Phillipi

Non eris altior, at meritis minor hoc quoque scribi
Ludere, prælia, cunctaque mœnia sponte patere.
Orbis et extima vidit, et ultima, vir fore natus,
Gentibus, urbibus et dominantibus est dominatus.
Illeque Cyrus? Fama relinquitur. Cæsar obisti.

Thou shalt not be higher than the son of Philip, but shall be written less of achievement than he. He saw the farthest and uttermost ends of the earth, born to be a man, and ruled over nations and cities and kings. And thou, Cyrus? Where art thou? Fame has abandoned thee. And Cæsar? Thou, too, art dead.

STANZA XV.

This stanza seems to be a reflection from the Book of Ecclesiasticus xli. 3, 4, by Joshua Ben-Sirach:

"Be not affrighted at death thy lot; remember them that have been before thee and that came after. This is the lot of all flesh from the Lord. Wherefore dost thou push from thee the ordinance of the Most High? Be it a thousand years, or a hundred, or ten, there is no grievance concerning life among the dead."

Compare Matthew Arnold's fine lines:

Yes, as the son of Thetis said,
I hear thee saying now:
"Greater by far than thee are dead,
Strive not. Die also thou!"

STANZA XVII.

Persius has put this thought with a pithiness which is the despair of the translator, and of course minus the biblical allusion:

Cum lux altera venit
Jam cras hesternum consumpsimus; ecce aliud cras
Egerit hos annos, et semper paulum erit ultra.

Satires V. 67.

When dawns another day
Reflect that yesterday's to-morrow's o'er,
Thus one to-morrow, one to-morrow more,
Have seen long years before them fade away
And still appear no nearer than to-day.

Gifford's translation.

Compare: Les années paraissent longues quand elles sont encore loin de nous; arrivées, elles disparaissent; elles nous échappent en un instant.—Massillon, *Fragment du sermon sur la mort, la brièveté de la vie*, one of the finest monuments of pulpit eloquence in literature.

STANZA XVIII.

Purpura transiit escaque finiit, ultio restat.
Rege coro sata vermibus est data, factaque vermis.
At claros homines voluerunt se atque potentes,
Ut fundamento stabili fortuna maneret
Et palcidam possent opulenti degere vitam,
Nequiquam quoniam ad summum succedere honorem,

Certantes iter infestum fecere viæ,
 Et tamen e summo, quasi fulmen, deicit ictos
 Invidia interdum contemptim in Tartara tætra;
 Ut satius multo jam sit parere quietum
 Quam regere imperio res velle et regna tenere.
 Ergo regibus occisis subversa jacebit
 Pristina majestas soliorum et sceptrâ superba,
 Et capitis summi præclarum insigne cruentum,
 Sub pedibus vulgi magnum lugebit honorem.
 Quod si quis vera vitam ratione gubernet,
 Divitiæ grandes homini sunt vivere parce
 Æquo animo.

Purple passes and eating comes to an end, but
 vengeance endures. The flesh that sprang from kings
 is given to worms — is become worms. Men have
 wished to be famous and powerful in order that their
 fortunes might rest on a firm foundation, and that
 they might by their wealth be able to lead a tranquil
 life; but in vain, since in their struggle to mount up
 to the highest dignities they rendered their path one
 full of danger; and even if they reach it, yet envy,
 like a thunderbolt, sometimes strikes and dashes men
 down from the highest point with ignominy into
 noisome Tartarus; so that far better is it to obey in
 peace and quiet than to wish to rule with supreme
 power and be the master of kingdoms. For kings
 shall be slain and the ancient majesty of thrones and
 proud sceptres shall be overthrown and laid in the
 dust, and the glorious badge of the sovereign head
 bloodstained beneath the feet of the rabble, shall
 mourn for its high prerogative. Were a man to order
 his life by the rule of true reason, a frugal substance
 joined to a contented mind is for him great riches.

STANZA XIX.

With mediæval fondness for redundancy the poet
 turns this thought and figure over and over, which I
 have omitted to do in the stanza.

Terrea gloria nunc quasi lilia, cras quasi ventus.
 Quid rogo carnea gloria? Quid rosa? Fœnum.
 Stat rosa pristina nomine nuda tenemus.
 Flos erat, est fimus ille potissimus illeque fortis;

Vix ibi sportula plena, vel urnula quo prius orbis
Mane stat aggere, nec mora vespere fertur humatus.
Qui modo flos *fuit*, in spatio *ruit* unius horæ;
Mox rapitur, *licet* ingenio *micet* atque decore.

[Notice that these two lines are "leonine hexameters," i.e. hexameters containing rhymes or assonances. For an account of the technique of this form of mediæval verse see Taylor, *The Mediaeval Mind*, vol. II, pp. 199-200.]

Laus stat imaginis, umbraque nominis, immo nec
umbra.

Proinde licet quot vis vivendo condere sæcla;
Mors æterna tamen nilo minus, illa manebit,
Nec minus ille diu jam non erit, ex hodierno
Lumine qui finem vitæ fecit, et ille,
Mensibus atque annis qui multis occidit ante.
Jure igitur pereunt, succumbunt omnia plagis
Sic igitur magni quoque circum mœnia mundi
Expugnata dabunt labem putrisque ruinas.
Ergo rerum inter summam minimamque quid escit?

Earthly glory, like lilies now, to-morrow is as the wind. What is the glory of the flesh? I ask. 'T is earth. Its roses? Grass. The rose of yore exists in name only; mere names we wear. He was a flower and now is slime, that powerful, that brave one. Scarcely would he fill a basket or a little urn who before filled the world. In the morning he stands upon the earth; in the evening he is carried out for burial. That which was but now a blooming flower falls in the space of an hour, and is shortly snatched away, though it flash with the beauty of body and soul. The glory of a statue remains and the shadow of a name. Nay, not even a shadow. You may complete as many generations as you please during your life: none the less, however, will everlasting death await you; and for no less a long time will he be no more in being who, beginning with to-day, has ended his life, than the man who died many months and many years ago. With reason all things perish. So shall the walls of the great world around be stormed and fall to decay and crumbling ruins. Therefore between the sum of things and the least of things what difference?

Ausonius, the best of post-classical Latin poets, sums up in one line a thought which the mediæval ecclesiastic could not help being turgid about:

Una dies aperit, conficit una dies

Idyl xv.

Malherbe, in the beautiful lines of consolation which he wrote to his friend Du Perrier, who had lost a little daughter, exquisitely uses this figure of the rose born to perish so soon.

Mais elle était du monde, où les plus belles choses
Ont le pire destin,

Et, rose, elle a vecu ce que vivent les roses
L'espace d'un matin.

STANZAS XXII-III.

The thought embodied in stanzas xxii-xxiii is clear evidence of the influence of Aristotelian philosophy, as it was metamorphosed through the alembic of the mediæval—especially the Arabic—mind. The scholastics of the early Middle Ages only knew Aristotle as a logician. But in the thirteenth century the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics* became well known, principally through Toledo translations from Arabic into Latin of the abridgements of Avicenna and the commentaries of Averroes. Europe by that time had a complete and systematically developed philosophy. But Averroistic Aristotelianism was at odds with the traditional teachings of the church. It taught that God knew universals, but not particulars; whence it was argued that God had no foreknowledge and was not a providence. Accordingly, if there was no providence governing the world, everything must happen by hazard or destiny, unless some other supernal influence could be adduced. Since the intelligent mind rejects the idea that events happen from mere chance, and Mohammedan Aristotelianism was opposed to the eastern doctrine of fatalism (or destiny), the Arabs concluded that everything was determined by the movement of the stars—and therefore by the intelligence which ordered them. In such a teaching, obviously, there was no room for the church's chastisement of the damned or for the celestial glory of

the saved. The argument was carried further: Since God does not know the world except in universals and not particulars, how could He have created it? Manifestly it is idle to think that the world was created from all eternity and to all eternity. And if not the world, how can the creatures of earth claim immortality? Averroistic Aristotelianism made a profound impression. Many thinkers accepted it with all its implied consequences. There were clerks at Paris who denied the existence of God, the eternality of the universe and the very immortality of the soul. Such were Boethius of Dacia, Siger of Brabant, and Bernard of Nivelles, whose teachings we will find again farther on. Compare what has been said in the introduction.

STANZA XXVI.

The same thought is to be found in John of Salisbury, *Polycrat.* VI. 12, from whom it most certainly was borrowed:

“In qua laborans mundus jam senuit, in qua plus temporis consumptum est quam in acquirendo et regendo orbis consumpserit Cæsarea domus.”

STANZA XXVII.

This is an echo of the piercing inquiry of St. Augustine in his *Confessions*, bk. I, ch. 6, sec. 9: Dic mihi, Deus, utrum jam alicui ætati meæ mortuæ successerit infantia mea: an illa est quam egi intra viscere matris meæ? Nam et de illa est mihi nonnihil indicatum est, et prægnantes ipse vidi feminas. Quid ante hanc etiam, dulcedo mea, Deus meus? Fuine alicubi? aut aliquis? Nam quis mihi dicat ista non habeo; nec pater, nec mater, potuerunt, nec aliorum experimentum, nec memoria.

STANZAS XXVII-IX.

The figure is of a potter's wheel as the symbol of fortune, and the uncertain fashioning of human life. There is a wonderful description of a potter at his task in Ecclesiasticus, “whose manner of working is described in terms which make us regret that the Hebrew original of this passage is not among the

recovered fragments.”—Bevan, *Jerusalem under the high priests*, p. 67. Marcus Aurelius says: “The wheel of the world has ever the same motion, upward and downward, from generation to generation.” Omar Khayyám’s use of the metaphor will occur to all. Cf. Romans xi. 21.

STANZA XXX.

E mare primum homines possent oriri.

“Anaximander, who lived after 600 B.C., held that man was descended from a fish, and that animals only developed legs and other organs after the waters which originally covered the earth had dried up.”

Masson, *Lucretius, epicurean and poet*, p. 172 note.

The scientific inquiry of the ancient Greeks far exceeded what is usually thought. Epicurus anticipated the “nerve-storm” of the modern physiologist. Masson, *loc. cit.*, p. 347. Atmospheric pressure and the conservation of energy were also divined, if not understood. “The Darwinian doctrines of evolution, both the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, are closely foreshadowed by him [Lucretius, *De rerum natura*]. The vexed questions of our day as to man’s origin and destiny look us in the face again in his poem. . . . Science has now proved that his propositions as to the constitution of matter, in each case, are either certainly true, or else foreshadow the truth. Indeed, its agreement with the results of modern science makes us wonder how the ancient students of nature, who had no means of verifying the observations of the senses through experiment, could have succeeded as they did. Like men walking abroad at night without a lantern, they could take with them no test of experimental inquiry by which to verify their hypothesis; but in spite of all, some faculty enabled them to keep the right path. . . . It was Gassendi who rescued Epicurus’ atomic theory from the forgotten science of the old world and revived it as the truest basis for a scientific study of nature. Through Gassendi and his influence both on Newton and on Boyle, as well as on many other minds of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Epicurus’ theory has taken firm root in modern

science, and has developed, by stage after stage, into that atomic theory of modern chemistry and, in our own day in particular, in molecular physics. . . . What would Lucretius have said to the spectrum analysis by which the chemist can literally pass beyond the 'flaming ramparts of the world,' and bring us tidings from the distant stars?"—Masson, *loc. cit.*, pp. 76, 81, 83 note. Cf. Tyrrell, *Latin Poetry*, pp. 85-88.

For the detrimental effect of the church upon Greek scientific thought see Hatch, *Influence of Greek ideas and usages upon the Christian church* [Hibbert Lectures], 1890, p. 26 f.

STANZAS XXXI-II.

The thought in these lines was probably less suggested by Genesis i. 2: "And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," than by Vergil's *Georgics* IV. 221:

Deum namque ire per omnes
Terrasque tractusque maris, cælumque profundum.
Through every land God journeys, and across
The ocean wastes and through the depths of heaven.

The psychology embodied here, though written six hundred years ago, agrees with the findings of modern psychological research. "Our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential gorms of consciousness entirely different, . . . No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded. Yet they may determine attitudes though they cannot furnish formulas, and open a region though they fail to give a map."—James, *The varieties of religious experience*, p. 388.

And Benson in his *Life of Fitzgerald*, p. 186, writes: "The most precise and definite religious systems, after all, can only profess to touch the fringe of the deep and perennial mysteries of life. They seem to brighten only the crescent edge of the shadowy orb, and leave the dark tracts unrevealed. The mystery

of pain, of evil, of the future life, of the brevity of existence,— these can not be solved. The utmost that religion can do is to illuminate a few yards of the glimmering pathway.”

STANZAS XXXIII-IV.

Sed nil dulcius est bene quam munita tenere
Edita doctrina sapientium templa serena;
Despicere unde queas alios passimque videre
Errare, atque viam palantes quærere vitæ.
Quapropter quoniam nil nostro in corpore gazæ
Proficiunt neque nobilitas neque gloria regni,
Quod superest animo quoque nil prodesse putandum.

But nothing is sweeter than to occupy the well-defended serene heights of the wise, built high with learning, from which you may be able to look down on others, and see them wandering and straying in all directions in search of the path of life. Wherefore since neither treasures, nor nobility, nor the glory of a kingdom are of any profit to the body, we must also deem that they are of no profit to the soul.

STANZA XXXV.

This was a popular legend in the Middle Ages and is alluded to by Dante, *Purgatorio*, canto X.

STANZAS XXXVI-VII.

Again I have abridged.

Cur etiam nunc est mortalibus horror,
Qui delubra Dei nova toto suscitât orbi?
Terrarum et festis cogit celebrare diebus?
Profanum. Si certam finem esse viderent
Ærurnarum homines, aliqua ratione valerent
Episcoporum minis obsistere vero.
Nunc ratio nulla est restandi, nulla facultas,
Æternas quoniam pœnas in morte timendum.
Sed metus in vita pœnarum, mens conscia factis,
Nec videt interea qui terminus esse malorum
Possit nec quæ sit pœnarum denique finis
Atque eadem metuît magis hæc ne in morte
gravescant.
Inde metus maculat pœnarum præmia vitæ.

What is the cause of that shuddering awe implanted in the human heart, which at this very time is raising up new churches to God over the whole world, and impels men to throng them on holy days? How immoral! If men saw that there was a fixed limit to the things which beset them they would be able in some way to defy the threatenings of the bishops. As it is, there is no way, no means of resisting, since they all fear everlasting pains after death. The conscience-stricken mind sees not what end there can be of ills, or what limit at last there may be to punishments, and fears lest these very evils will be enhanced after death.

STANZA XXXVIII.

Mortalitatis

Obsurduerunt aures completæ stridore catenæ.

[A magnificent line borrowed literally from Augustine's *Confessions*, bk. II, ch. 2, sec. 1.]

Præsulis infula, solvere vincula, vincla tenere,

Canone respuat, aereque destruit, astruit aere.

Gratia vendita, gratia tradita vi feritatis;

Gratia, gratia, quam parit ternaue marca

Quæ tamen emptio, sacra redemptio fertur earum.

Men have become deaf with mortality's loud-clanking chain. The chasubled bishop refuses to loose bonds and holds bonds tight, according to the canon law, and destroys or builds up for gold. Grace is sold, grace is bestowed through force and fraud. Grace, grace, which is got for a paltry sum of money. Yet this purchase is called their holy redemption.

"The Stoics and the Platonists refused to admit that self-completion could be attained through the sacrifice of another, a view, of course, implicit in the church's doctrine of atonement. Plato waxed indignant over the moral effect of believing that the unjust man can, while retaining all the gains of his injustice, 'square' the gods and circumvent them by some imposing sort of ritual."—Masson, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

Canon Bigg, *The church's task under the Roman Empire*, pref., p. xiv, has said: "They [Stoics and Platonists] would not admit that the undeserved, vol-

untary suffering of one could make another better. Plotinus expressly rejects the idea as immoral. . . . It seemed to him inconceivable that it should be the duty of a good man to give up any portion of his spiritual wealth for the relief of the poor, to make himself worse than others might be better."

Mr. Henry Osborn Taylor, in his history of *The Mediaeval Mind*, vol. II, p. 296, admirably contrasts the ancient and the mediæval Christian thought:

"While neither Plato's inquiry for truth nor Aristotle's catholic search for knowledge was isolated from its bearing on either the conduct or the event of life, nevertheless with them rational inquiry was a final motive, representing in itself that which was most divinely human, and so the best for man. But with the philosophers of the Middle Ages it never was quite so. For the need of salvation had worked in men's blood for generations. And salvation, man's highest good, did not consist in humanly-attained knowledge or in virtue won by human strength; but was divinely mediated, and had to be accepted upon authority."

STANZA XXXIX.

Perque tot ætates hominum, tot tempora et annos,
Cum fortuna lucem quærat, vix invenit usquam.
Nam etiam tenebris immersum Tartaron atra
In lucem de nocte vocant.

Through all the periods of man's life, all generations, all years, although man seeks ever for light, scarce ever does he find it. For there are those who summon Hell itself into daylight out of black night and the gulf of shadows.

STANZA XL.

Omnis cum in tenebris præsertim vita laboret;
Quamvis ridicula hæc ludibraque esse videmus.
Multi similes nautis projectis ab undis.

For all life is a struggle in the dark to some, although we see that these things are food for laughter and mere mockeries. Many are like sailors cast up by the waves.

STANZA XLV.

Humana ante oculos fœde nunc jam jacet
In terris oppressa gravi sub religione.

For human life lies shamefully grovelling before
our eyes, bowed to the dust beneath the heavy weight
of superstition.

STANZA XLVI.

The poet, like Lucretius, "feels that he has escaped
from superstition as from some gloomy low-vaulted
prison. He has cut his way through the phalanx of
his priestly jailers, and now is in the open."—Masson,
op. cit., p. 410.

I find these sentences in a recent article by Mr.
Bertrand Russell: "It is escape from prison that
gives to some moments and to some thoughts a quality
of infinity, like light breaking through from some
greater world beyond. Sudden beauty in the midst
of strife, uncalculating love, or the night-wind in the
trees, seem to suggest the possibility of a life free
from the conflicts and pettinesses of our every-day
world, a life where there is peace which no misfortune
can disturb."—*Hibbert Journal*, Oct., 1912, p. 48.

One might use the very words of Goethe in this
connection:

Away from the darkened rooms,
Where they grudge you the light of day;
Where men low-bowing in craven fear
To their mis-shapen idols pray.
Of superstitious worshipers
Enough in the years of old. To-day
Have done with portent, myth and ghost —
Leave them all to your teachers gray.
[Gesetz der Trübe, in *Gott und Welt*.]

STANZA XLVII.

Mutat enim mundi naturam totius ætas
Ex alioque alius status excipere omnia debet,
Nel manet ulla sui similis res. Omnia migrant.
Aurea tempora primaque robora, redde, rogamus.

For time changes the face of the whole world, and one condition of things after another necessarily follows in all things. All things move and suffer change. Give back those golden times, we ask, and that pristine strength.

STANZA XLVIII.

Comparo curribus, æquor arantibus arida velis,
Ruraque piscibus, aera navibus, astra camelis,
Candida de nigris, et de candentibus atra,
Quadrata rotundis mutata.

Perhaps these lines were influenced by Lucretius, III. 784-86:

Denique in æthere non arbor, non æquore in alto
Nubes esse queunt nec pisces vivere in arvis,
Nec cruor in lignis neque saxis inesse.

STANZA L.

Sed sua pascua non nisi menstrua sunt animarum,
Solaque funera solaque munera primitiarum:
Quid mora? pascit, est quia dicitur, est sibi pastor.

His fodder is nothing but the purification of souls and the celebration of first fruits. Enough—he feeds, he is, because so called—is to himself, a pastor.

STANZA LIV.

An allusion to the historic claim of St. John Lateran to be “*omnium urbis et orbis ecclesiarum mater et caput*”—the mother and head of the churches of the city [Rome] and of the world.

STANZAS LV-LVII.

I confess to have dealt very freely in the translation with the original, which is a long and turgid invective:

Hæc neque nomine digna, nec ordine ecclesia stat;
Hæc vitis perit, hæc animas gerit irrequietas.
Hæc bona perdidit; hæc genus edidit ore dolosum,
Pectore mobile, re variabile, menta probosum.

Recta perhorruit, ordine corrui, eminet astu.
 Sollicitudine, fraude, libidine, crimine fastu.
 Est sine nomine, nam sine numine, nam sine jure;
 Perdida cladibus est, quia fraudibus, hæ sibi curæ.
 Pontificum status ante fuit ratus integer ante;
 Ille statum dabat, ordine nunc labatille labante.
 Gratia corrui, aliorum in horruit amplior Istro.
 Pontificum status excidio datus, exstat avarus;
 Sternite, sternite, gutture sospite, pseudomagistri!

O mala secula, venditur infula pontificalis;
 Infula venditur, haud reprehenditur emptio talis.
 Venditur annulus, hinc lucra Romulus auget et urget;
 Est modo mortua Roma superflua; quando resurget?
 Roma superfluit, afflua corrui arida plena;
 Roma dat omnibus omnia dantibus, omnia Romæ;
 Transita vocula longaque fabula persequitur te.
 Roma ruens rota, fœda, satis notat cauteriat te;
 Gurgis es altior, arca voracior, alta lacuna.
 Fas mihi scribere, fas mihi dicere—'Roma peristi.'
 Fas mihi dicere, fas mihi scribere—'Roma fuisti.'
 Fas mihi dicere, fas mihi scribere—'Roma ruisti.'

The church is neither worthy of a name nor erect in its place. It is perishing from vice and displays a restless spirit. It has destroyed its blessings and brought forth a brood crafty of speech, fickle of heart, uncertain in affairs, vicious of mind. It shudders at the right, is careless of order, distinguished by guile, soliciting, deceit, lust, arrogance, and guilt. It is without a name being without God and without justice. It is destroyed by disasters because of frauds—these are its care. Lo, a race vicious of speech, impious in character! The place of the pope once was a tower of strength, firm and inviolable. Now it totters as things totter around it. Grace is dead and a cold broods over us wider than the Danube. The high place of the popes is given over to destruction; they have become misers. Spread, spread destruction abroad, while your necks are yet safe, ye false teachers.

O evil age, the chasuble of the pontiff is sold, the chasuble is sold and this commerce goes unrebuked. The ring is sold and hence Romulus increases his

gains. Overflowing Rome is dead now. When will she rise again? Rome overflowed and collapsed in her affluence, withering in her fulness. Rome gives all things to all who give all things to Rome.

A voice that is gone and a distant tale pursue thee.
Rome, thou art a wobbling wheel, a foul enough
mark brands thee,
Thou art a deep whirlpool, a devouring receptacle,
a deep pool.

'Tis right for me to write, to say, 'Thou hast perished.'

'Tis right for me to say, to write, 'Thou wast.'

'Tis right for me to say, to write, 'Thou art fallen.'

STANZA LVIII.

This interesting stanza, enunciating the doctrine of "eternal recurrence" so familiar to readers of Nietzsche, admirably serves to fix the time of the poet. For the doctrine of eternal recurrence was a striking teaching of Siger of Brabant and his school of Averroistic Aristotelians. Siger had a vision of Time truly poetical. He believed in cyclic evolution — that is to say, he believed that the ideas of an epoch, the laws, civilization, religions, would return again to the point of departure. But as the series of variations which formed a cycle were infinitely long, men were unable to perceive the transitions or even to retain the memory of the changes. Nevertheless, he held that these great æons succeeded one another, the long series of evolutions and transitions ultimately getting around in a circle to the beginning again. See Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant*, p. 171.

STANZA LXII.

. . . antiquo more sacrorum
Ecclesia munificat mortalis muta salute,
Quæ bene et eximiæ quamvis disposita ferantur,
Longe sunt tamen a vera ratione repulsa.
Omnia enim stolidi magis admirantur amantque,
Inversis quæ sub verbis latitantia cernunt,
Veraque constituunt quæ belle tangere possunt
Auris et lepido quæ sunt fucata sonore.

After immemorial ritual the Church, with inexpressible blessing, sifts down her grace upon mortals. All which things, well and beautifully as they are manifested, yet are widely removed from true reason. For fools admire and like all the more things which they perceive to be concealed under involved language, and think things to be true which are glossed over with finely sounding phrases, the sonorous rhythm of which pleases the ear. Cf. Lucretius II. 606-28, description of the gorgeous processional and mysteries of the worship of Magna Mater.

The principle of the æsthetic function in worship, so sharply condemned in these lines, is eloquently set forth by James, *The varieties of religious experience*, pp. 458-60:

"It enriches our bare piety to carry these exalted and mysterious verbal additions just as it enriches a church to have an organ and old brasses, marbles and frescoes and stained windows. Epithets lend an atmosphere and overtones to our devotion. They are like a hymn of praise and service of glory, and may sound the more sublime for being incomprehensible. . . . Although some persons aim most at intellectual purity and simplification, for others *richness* is the supreme imaginative requirement."

Ruskin, *Stones of Venice* [St. Mark's, sec. xx], enumerates the rich "assemblage of those sources of influence which address themselves to the commonest instincts of the human mind: . . . darkness and mystery, confused recesses of buildings, artificial light employed in small quantity, but maintained with a constancy which seems to give it a kind of sacredness, preciousness of material easily comprehended by the vulgar eye, close air loaded with a sweet and peculiar odour associated only with religious services, solemn music and tangible idols or images having popular legends attached to them."

STANZA LXIII.

I have borrowed this last line from Matthew Arnold's famous sonnet, for it quite exactly translates the Latin:

Sed mage pacata posse omnia mente tueri.

STANZA LXV.

Nec vero superstitione tollenda religio tollitur, wrote Cicero, *De divinatione*, II. 72, 148.—“True religion is raised by the destruction of superstition.” The materialism, the grossness, the bigotry, the ignorance—in a word, the superstition which pervaded mediæval faith found one of its strongest manifestations in the veneration of relics. The Iconoclastic Controversy in the eighth century was a revolt against the abuses of the practice. The more intelligent and the deeper spiritual natures of the Middle Age protested in vain against the worship of relics. Guibert de Nogent, born 1053, in the diocese of Beauvais, wrote a famous treatise, *De pignoribus sanctorum*, which he dedicated to Eudes, abbot of St. Symphorian de Beauvais. See Le Franc, *Le traité des reliques de Guibert de Nogent*, in *Etudes du moyen-âge dédiées à Gabriel Monod*, pp. 285-306. Possibly this cry of outraged intelligence of more than a century before him was known to the poet.

STANZA LXVI.

Aurea tempora primaque robora præterierunt;
Aurea gens fuit, et simul hæc ruit, illa ruerunt.
Pristina sæcula non nisi regula nota regabat;
Sæcula pristina non nisi pagina viva docebat.
Quæ modo marmore qualibet arbore templa
struebant;
Quæ sculptibus atria cultibus expoliebant.

The golden age and its primeval strength have gone. Golden the race was, and when it fell they fell. The primitive age governed only by rules that were known. The primitive age taught only from the living page. The temples now built of marble they built of any tree; the halls now adorned with sculpture they adorned with devotion.

STANZA LXVII.

The lines of the original here seem to be an amplification of Horace's line in the *Ars Poetica* [line 309]:

Rem tibi Socraticæ poterunt ostendere chartæ,

and possibly reminiscent of Cicero's "errare mehercule malo cum Platone . . . quam cum istis vera sentire."—*Tusc. Disp.*, I. 17, 39.

STANZA LXIX.

The religious mysticism here reflected was a favorite teaching of the votaries of paganism in the fourth century A.D. and implicit in the belief of Julian.

"The myths are all the expressions of God and of the goodness of God; but they follow the usual method of divine revelation, to wit, mystery, and allegory. The myths state clearly the one tremendous fact that the Gods *are*; that is what Julian cared about and the Christians denied: *what* they are the myths reveal only to those who have understanding."

Sir Gilbert Murray, *Four stages of Greek religion*, p. 158.

The most famous exponent and populizer of the doctrine was Euemerus, a Greek mythographer who lived in the second half of the fourth century B.C. "In a kind of philosophical romance, Euemerus declared that he had sailed to some No-Man's Land, Panchæa, where he found the verity about mythical times engraved on pillars of bronze. This truth he published in the *Sacra Historia* ['Iera' Anagraphé], where he rationalised the fables, averring the gods had been men, and that the myths were exaggerated and distorted records of facts."—Andrew Lang, *Myth, ritual and religion*, I. 15.

The dying paganism of the fourth and fifth centuries believed that "Greek philosophy was the relic of a primeval relation."—Mark Pattison, *Life of Isaac Casaubon*, p. 440. Even Dante leaned somewhat towards this belief. Roger Bacon in the thirteenth century believed that inspiration was relative, not absolute, and so far qualified the current teaching of the absolute and sole divine inspiration of the scriptures by holding that the ancient philosophers had been partially inspired.

"God illuminated their minds," he writes, "to desire and perceive the truths of philosophy. He even

disclosed the truth to them. The study of wisdom may always increase in this life because nothing is perfect in human discoveries. Therefore we later men ought to supplement the defects of the ancients, since we have entered into their labors, through which, unless we are asses, we may be incited to improve upon them. It is a disgrace to keep using merely what has been attained, and never reach further for one's self."—Taylor, *The Mediaeval Mind*, II. p. 492.

"The subtle transcendentalism of the Greek fathers was foreign to Latin Christianity; the characteristics of Roman life as reflected in Roman worship are plainly visible in the Latin fathers. From Minucius Felix onwards, the Christians who wrote in Latin, so far from being imaginative and dreamy, are one and all matter-of-fact; historical, abounding in illustration of life and conduct; ethical rather than speculative; legal in their cast of thought rather than philosophical; rhetorical in their manner of expression rather than fervent or poetical."—W. Warde Fowler, *Roman religious experience*, p. 458.

For the influence of Roman legal and institutional forms on the disappearance of myth, see Harnack, *History of Dogma*, bk. V. ch. 2.

In his *Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche holds a passionate brief for the "master-morality" of ancient paganism. He believes that Christianity, by reason of its authority, its constraint of the spirit, its dogmatism, its institutionalization, has exercised a deterrent and inhibiting influence upon the progress of civilization.

"The world grew older and the dream vanished. . . . For this is the manner in which religions are wont to die out: when, under the stern, intelligent eyes of an orthodox dogmatism, the mythical presuppositions of a religion are systematised as a completed sum of historical events, and when one begins apprehensively to defend the credibility of the myth — when accordingly, the feeling of myth dies out and its place is taken by the claims of religion to historical foundations. . . . A people — and for the rest also a man — is worth just as much only as its ability to impress

on its experiences the seal of eternity. . . . The contrary happens when a people begins to comprehend itself historically and to demolish the mythical bulwarks around it; with which there is usually connected a marked secularization, a breach with the unconscious metaphysics of its earlier existence, in all ethical consequences.”—*Birth of Tragedy*, pp. 17, 84, 177.

STANZAS LXXIII-IV.

Ipse vocat nostros animos ad sidera mundus.
Nam cum suspicimus magni cælestia mundi
Templa, super stellisque micantibus æthera fixum,—
Luna dies et nox, et noctis signa severa —
Et venit in mentem solis lunæque viarum,
Tunc aliis oppressa malis in pectora stupor,
Ille quoque expergefatum caput erigere infit
Quod forte Dei nobis immensa potestas
Sit, vario motu quæ candida sidera verset.

The very world calls our minds upward to the stars. When we look up at the celestial temples of the world on high, and see the sun and moon and the stars—the moon and the light of day, and the night with its solemn fires—and note the regularity of their motion, we can hardly avoid the thought that it can only be some infinite and divine power which wheels the bright stars in their varied motion.

The sentiment in these lines is a good example of what has been characterized as “the emotion which is roused by sudden revelations of the infinitudes, the silences and eternities that surround us.” Aristotle, Lucretius, Seneca, and Kant use almost the same language in contemplating the heavens. Kant found two things in the world still forever wonderful—“The starry heavens above and the moral law within.” Aristotle relates that to the question: What made life worth living? Anaxagoras replied: “Contemplating the heavens and the total order of the Cosmos.”

STANZA LXXV.

Hæc ego divino cupiam ad sidera flatu
Ferre, nec in turba nec turbæ carmina condam.
Sed in cælo noscenda canam mirantibus astra.

I would bear my song with divine measure unto the stars. Not in the crowd nor for the crowd will I build my poem. I shall sing secret things unto the heavens; the stars shall hear me and marvel.

STANZA LXXX.

The phrase is from Ruskin, which I have adopted as a translation of the line

Vita brevis nulli superest quin vita valenda.

STANZA LXXXI.

Walter Pater, *Marius the Epicurean*, vol. I, p. 181, has said: "Religion has been always something to be done, rather than something to be thought or believed or loved."

Both Seneca and Martial express the thought embodied in these stanzas:

Quam bene vivas refert, non quamdiu.—Seneca, *Ep.*, xviii. 2.

Non est vivere, sed valere, vita.—Martial, xi. 32, 8.

"Only the present," Marcus Aurelius says over and over, "is ours. Neither the past nor the future are ours to dispose of."

All of them, though, are echoing a saying of Epicurus: "We are born once; twice we cannot be born: for eternity we must be non-existent. Yet thou who art not master of to-morrow, puttest off the right time. The life of all of us is ruined by procrastination, and it is on this account that each of us dies before he is ready."

These two stanzas are clear reflections of the influence of the Neo-Stoic philosophy. The Stoics "found in the progress towards virtue a sufficient end of existence"—a philosophy which has had its modern votaries. Rénan said to his wife when he was dying:

"Be calm and resigned. We undergo the laws of nature, of which we are a manifestation. *We* perish,

we disappear, but heaven and earth remain, and the march of time goes forever forward."

So also Sir Leslie Stephen has written:

"We may comfort ourselves, if comfort be needed, by the reflection that though the memory may be transitory, the good done by a noble life and character may last far beyond any horizon which can be realized by our imagination."—*Forgotten Benefactors* [last sentence].

STANZA LXXXIII.

In the original these lines are very sonorous:

Nec pietas ulla est velatum sæpe videri
Vortier ad lapidem, atque omnes accedere ad aras,
Nec procumbere humi prostratum, et pandere palmas.

Nor does religion consist in showing one's self constantly, with veiled face, before a stone, and approaching all the altars, nor in prostrating one's self on the ground and stretching out open hands towards the sanctuaries.

STANZA LXXXIV.

Perque pedes proprios nascentia carmina surgunt.
Per partes ducenda fides, et singula rerum
Sunt gradibus tradenda suis, ut cum omnia certa
Notitia steterint, proprios revocentur ad usus.
Sic mihi cunctanti tantæ succedere moli
Materies primum rerum, ratione remota.
Omnia quando paulatim crescunt.

By measured steps a poem rises and comes to live. I too must learn line by line, step by step, till all things stand sure in knowledge. Even so I, timidly endeavoring a great labor, must first collect the material of the building, letting wait reason's larger plan. For all things grow gradually.

This is thoroughly Aurelian: "Word upon word, every one by itself, must the things that are spoken

be conceived, and understood. And so the things which are done, purpose after purpose, every one by itself likewise."—Casaubon's translation [VII. 4].

STANZA LXXXVI.

Lovers of Tennyson will at once recognize the source of the first line of this stanza. It quite exactly translates the Latin verse of the mediæval poet:

Expetam et omnia comperiam, nil cedere certus.

STANZA LXXXVIII.

Mors via maxima, mors patet ultima linea rerum;
Mors acies rerum, quisquis mortem effugit
Contempserit; timidum quemque consequitur.

Cf. Quintus Curtius, *De rebus gestis Alexandri*,
IV. 14, 25.

STANZA LXXXIX.

Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, bk. II, ch. 9, hits off this same thought:

"Was it not to preach forth this same Higher that Sages and Martyrs, the Poet and the Priest, in all times, have spoken and suffered; bearing testimony through life and through death, of the God-like that is in man, and how, in the God-like only has he strength and freedom."

STANZA XC.

Compare Amos iii. 8: "The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy"; and Hosea xi. 10: "They shall walk after the Lord, who shall roar like a lion."

The lion is the symbol of strength and truth in both pagan and Christian thought. Who does not remember the lion in Nietzsche: *Thus spake Zarathustra* [pt. I. 1]: "The spirit of the lion saith 'I will'."

STANZA XCII.

Like Euripides in the great transition epoch of Greek thought, the poet is resolved to grope his way to God along the line of reason.

Fato et tempore confectus, fessusque labore,
At tantum, pol, quantum animo contendere possum;
Nam neque decipitur ratio, nec decipit umquam.
Etenim alid ex alio clarescet nec mihi cæca
Nox iter eripiet quin ultima naturæ
Pervideam: ita res accendent lumina rebus.

Though worn by time and fate, and weary through toil, yet will I keep on searching and finding all things to the limit of my power. For reason never deceives nor is deceived. For one thing after another will grow clear, and dark night will not rob me of the road or keep me from examining the ultimate things of life. So old things will light the torch for new things.

Compare this stanza with II. 884 f. of the *Trojan Women*:

Base of the world, and o'er the world enthroned,
Whoe'er thou art, Unknown and hard of surmise,
Cause—Chain of Things or Man's own Reason—God
I give thee worship, who by noiseless paths
Of justice leadest all that breathes and dies.

Murray's translation.

So, in the *Agamemnon*, Æschylus says:

"Zeus, who made for man the road to thought."
This tribute to the power of reason is so purely Greek in character that it must have been derived by the poet from Lucretius.

Hugo of St. Victor was born at Hartingam in Saxony in 1096, and died at the monastery of St. Victor, near Paris, in 1141. He was one of the greatest mystics of the Middle Ages. See Haureau, *Hugues de St. Victor*, Paris, 1859; De Wulf, *History of Philosophy*, sec. 204.

STANZA XCIII.

This figure, comparing spiritual pilgrimage to climbing a high mountain, is to be found in Augustine's *Confessions*, bk. VII [last paragraph]:

Et aliud est de silvestri cacumine videre patriam pacis et iter ad eam noninvenire . . . at aliud tenere viam illuc ducentem.

For it is one thing from the mountain's shaggy summit to see the land of peace and to find no way thither . . . and another to keep on the way that that leads thither.

In both instances, perhaps, the metaphor is referable to Deuteronomy xxxii. 49-50.



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